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A MODERN PRIESTESS OF ISIS

ABRIDGED AND TRANSLATED ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH FROM THE RUSSIAN OF

VSEVOLOD SERGYEEVICH SOLOVYOFF

BY

WALTER LEAF, LITT.D.

WITH APPENDICES

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PREFATORY NOTE.

I am authorised by the Council of the Society for Psychical Research to state formally on their behalf that the present translation of Mr. Solovyoff's Modern Priestess of Isis *has been made and published with their approval, and to express their sense of the service which Mr. Leaf has rendered to the Society by undertaking the labour of translation. When the contents of Mr. Solovyoff's book became known to the Council, it seemed clear that certain portions of it—especially the accounts of the events at Würzburg described in chaps. xviii.-xx., the "Confession" of Madame Blavatsky given in chap. xxii., and the letters to Mr. Aksákoff given in chaps. xxvi. to xxix.—constituted an important supplement to the statement of the results of the inquiry into "Theosophical phenomena" carried out by a Committee of the Society in* 1884-5. *Our original idea was to publish a translation of these portions in the supplement to our* Proceedings: *but on further consideration it seemed to us clearly desirable, if possible, that the greater part of Mr. Solovyoff's entertaining narrative should be made accessible to English readers. For such English readers as were likely to be interested in learning anything more about Madame Blavatsky would not so much desire additional proof that she was a charlatan—a question already judged and decided—but rather some explanation of the remarkable success of her*

imposture; and Mr. Solovyoff's vivid description of the mingled qualities of the woman's nature—her supple craft and reckless audacity, her intellectual vigour and elastic vitality, her genuine bonhomie, *affectionateness and (on occasion) persuasive pathos—afforded an important element of the required explanation, such as probably no one but a compatriot could have supplied. Whether the Theosophical Society is likely to last much longer, I am not in a position to say; but even if it were to expire next year, its twenty years' existence would be a phenomenon of some interest for the historian of European society in the nineteenth century; and it is not likely that any book will be written throwing more light on its origin than* A Modern Priestess of Isis.

HENRY SIDGWICK.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

MR. SOLOVYOFF'S *Modern Priestess of Isis* appeared in eight of the monthly numbers for 1892 of the *Russky Vyestnik* (Russian Messenger), the leading literary magazine of Russia, and once the organ of the well-known Mr. Katkoff. The articles have since been published separately in book-form. The Council of the Society for Psychical Research, having had their attention called to the work, think that it is of such interest and importance, in relation to the inquiry carried out by them into "Theosophical Phenomena" in 1884-5, as to justify the publication of a translation. It should be stated at the outset that the accuracy of the translation is guaranteed by the fact of its revision by Mr. Michael Petrovo-Solovovo of St. Petersburg, an active member of the Society, to whom the hearty thanks of the Council and the translator are tendered for his assistance and advice.

It has been thought desirable to make considerable abbreviations from the original, falling

generally under one or other of the following heads: (1) It was clearly unnecessary to reproduce Mr. Solovyoff's long and excellent abridgment of the Report of the Committee on Theosophical Phenomena, and Mr. Hodgson's Report issued with it; those who will may find the original in vol. iii. of the *Proceedings*. (2) Mr. Solovyoff makes many references to previous articles published by Madame Jelihovsky, Madame Blavatsky's sister, in various Russian periodicals. These are not essential to his argument, and would be useless to readers to whom the articles in question are not accessible. (3) Mr. Solovyoff's pages are enlivened by many graphic descriptions of persons whom he met in connexion with Madame Blavatsky, especially members of the Paris Theosophical Society. But these again, however skilfully drawn, are yet only secondary to the principal portrait, and it is certainly better that what is merely personal should be excluded. (4) A certain amount of matter has been omitted as of insufficient interest for English readers, or as involving doubtful questions to which it was for various reasons not desirable to give further currency. But even with these considerable deductions it will be seen that the mass which remains not only presents us with an admirably told narrative and a psychological study of extreme interest,

but adds materially to the evidence touching the Theosophical Society and its foundress.

The appearance of the articles called of necessity for a reply from Madame Jelihovsky. This appeared in April, 1893, under the title of *H. P. Blavatsky and a Modern Priest of Truth*, in the form of a separate pamphlet. This too is given in an abridged form in Appendix A. I may say at once that the preparation of this abridgment has been by far the most difficult and anxious part of my task. There could be no hesitation as to the propriety of presenting the evidence offered on one side as well as on the other. But an examination of Madame Jelihovsky's pamphlet showed that only a small portion of it could be considered in the light of evidence at all. It consisted largely of mere personal attacks on Mr. Solovyoff, often in the form of innuendo and insinuation, rather than of open assertion; and was, to a great extent, irrelevant to the question of his trustworthiness as a witness. It covered 177 pages; and that this bulk of matter should be reprinted in full for the benefit of English readers was not to be thought of. I have therefore had to undertake the somewhat difficult task of preparing an abridgment which should contain all that could be considered evidential.

Much, however, I was able to cut out at once. All that dealt with passages omitted from the original narrative could, of course, be dropped without hesitation. This at once accounted for a large portion of a pamphlet where the strength of the attack was concentrated upon matters which did not directly touch the real question at issue. But the object of the rest was to produce disbelief in Mr. Solovyoff's veracity, partly by the evidence of letters written by himself, partly by comments and assertions of the authoress. As regards this I can only say that I have honestly and conscientiously endeavoured to give everything which is in any way to be regarded as of the nature of relevant fact. Two or three letters of Mr. Solovyoff's, and parts of some others, have been omitted. This has been done after careful consideration on the ground that they in no way whatever bear on the question at issue. They contain personal matters only, or refer to questions which it was thought right to omit from the principal narrative. The leading members of the Society for Psychical Research whom I have consulted with respect to these omissions, and who share the responsibility for them, are unanimous in holding that the letters are in no sense evidential.

In republishing his articles from the *Russky*

Vyestnik, Mr. Solovyoff added to them an Appendix containing a rejoinder to Madame Jelihovsky's answer. Of this again an abridgment is here given (Appendix B). The scale of the abridgment is about the same as in the case of the pamphlet with which it deals. Here, too, large omissions have been possible, as much of the rejoinder deals with matter which I have left out of Madame Jelihovsky's attack. With this Appendix the controversy appears to have stopped. The following pages will therefore give a fairly complete history of it, and enable readers to draw their own conclusions. But a few words of comment will perhaps not be out of place.

The evidence offered by Mr. Solovyoff falls into two distinct classes, which require separate consideration. There is, firstly, that which rests upon his own narrative; secondly, that which consists of documentary evidence, chiefly in the shape of letters written by Madame Blavatsky herself.

The authenticity of the letters has in no case been impugned, and in the case of the "Confession"[1] has been explicitly admitted by Madame Jelihovsky herself. The correspondence with Mr. Aksákoff[2] is further guaranteed

[1] See chap. xxii.

[2] See chaps. xxvi. to xxix.

by the name of the recipient, whose long life of devotion to psychical studies forms the best assurance that it would be as ridiculous as cruel to suppose him guilty of complicity in an attempt to palm off forged letters upon the public. And, indeed, the letters in question need little guarantee beyond the evidence of style which they carry with them. It may, therefore, be taken as certain that the letters are what they purport to be, the work of Madame Blavatsky's own hand.

The correspondence with Mr. Aksákoff proves beyond the possibility of refutation, (1) that at one time, in spite of her subsequent vehement denials of the fact, Madame Blavatsky was a professed and thorough spiritualist in the ordinary sense of the word. She therefore adopted the "theosophical" attitude of hostility to spiritualism only after 1874, and had recourse to deliberate falsehood to conceal the fact. (2) At this period she is entirely silent as to the Mahatmas who guided her action; her guardian and teacher is the "pure spirit" John King, well known at the *séances* of Williams and other professional mediums in both hemispheres; he is her "only friend" and thus occupies the place later taken by Morya and Koot Hoomi. With these two facts the whole legend, according to which she had, before her stay in

America in 1874, received initiation and instruction from her Mahatmas in Thibet, and ever since stood in continuous relations with them, is shown to be a later fabrication. The foundation of her whole theosophical teaching is a mere lie. The steps by which John King is developed into Morya are moreover clearly indicated. This correspondence alone forms a complete refutation of Madame Blavatsky's later doctrine.

When we come to Mr. Solovyoff's own narrative, the documentary evidence, important though it is, takes a secondary place; though it may either confirm or contradict the narrative, it is not such as to form by itself a proof positive of Madame Blavatsky's fraudulence.[1] The vital question is, does Mr. Solovyoff tell the truth in his account of the Würzburg conversations?[2] If he does, then, of course, there is an end of theosophy as a system of doctrine based upon communication from hidden Masters, of whom Madame Blavatsky was the prophet. The defenders of Madame Blavatsky are therefore bound to contend that Mr. Solovyoff is a man of so debased a character that

[1] Though indeed phrases such as those on pp. 181, 184, 185, are enough to carry conviction to any impartial reader.

[2] See chaps. xix. and xx.

he would not hesitate to invent a false accusation, in order morally to destroy a woman for whom he all the time professes a real sympathy and pity.

So far as the attack on him rests on the mere assertions of the assailant, it may, I think, be disregarded; for whatever may be the outcome of the controversy as affecting Mr. Solovyoff's character for veracity, it can hardly fail to prevent a careful reader from placing any reliance on the unsupported statements of Madame Jelihovsky's accusation. As to this, Mr. Solovyoff's reply, with M. Baissac's letter (p. 351), and that in which Colonel Brusiloff, Madame Jelihovsky's own witness, entirely contradicts her positive statements, is decisive. And another striking piece of evidence seems not to have been known to Mr. Solovyoff. On p. 292, Madame Jelihovsky triumphantly contradicts a statement of Mr. Solovyoff's, by a supposed quotation from a document which she states that she has in her possession. I have pointed out how a translation of this very document, issued under theosophical authority, confirms Mr. Solovyoff on this point and refutes Madame Jelihovsky. After this we may be excused if we pay no attention to her statements unless supported by positive proofs.

But I must turn aside for a moment to deal

with an accusation which, though it is not contained in the pamphlet, has been published, on the authority of Madame Jelihovsky or of one of her daughters, in a speech made by Mrs. Besant at a meeting of the Society for Psychical Research. Into the details of this accusation it is not necessary to go; for it is one which solely affects Mr. Solovyoff's private life, and has nothing to do with his character for veracity. But it is clearly the accusation to which Madame Jelihovsky alludes in her pamphlet, and which she says she will not publish, "because she has no clear proofs"; and whatever the nature of Mr. Solovyoff's offence, it was not, in Madame Jelihovsky's eyes, such as to prevent her from continuing on terms of intimate friendship with Mr. Solovyoff, and allowing him to be on an equally familiar footing with her unmarried daughters: he even married his second wife from her house.

Madame Jelihovsky is, moreover, a dangerous witness for her own side; for not only did she herself first warn Mr. Solovyoff against the moral danger of any dealings with her sister, but it is admittedly she who supplied him with information such as should render it impossible to represent Madame Blavatsky as a lady of exalted moral character.

So far then as Madame Jelihovsky's own

testimony goes, we shall not allow it to weigh against Mr. Solovyoff's high position in Russian society and literature. The only question for us is whether any of his letters, quoted by Madame Jelihovsky, are so inconsistent with his narrative as to lead us to refuse him credence.

It is clear that these letters and Mr. Solovyoff's own narrative present two very different pictures of his mental attitude during 1884 and 1885. The narrative represents Mr. Solovyoff, with the exception of short phases when he was carried away in spite of himself, as a cool-headed critic engaged on a scientific inquiry. The letters show that he was more than coquetting with belief during the greater part of this period. Readers have the materials for a judgment before them, and must decide for themselves as to the bearing of this on Mr. Solovyoff's credibility. It will be only reasonable that in so doing they should remember the inevitable tendency which a man has after the event, especially at an interval of several years, to consider himself wiser from the first than he was in reality; and they will also remember that Mr. Solovyoff is amply justified by his letters in stating that from the first he never professed an absolute belief in Madame Blavatsky and her doctrines; and that she was

throughout well aware of the fact. Nor should it be forgotten that the letters are not entire; they are selected by a bitter personal enemy with the purpose of damaging their writer, who is entitled to the benefit of his assertion that, if quoted in full, they would have strengthened his case.

The letter which raises the most serious question is, in my mind, the letter marked [B] on p. 288. This does, so far as I can judge, imply a real inconsistency with Mr. Solovyoff's narrative; it implies that he has not correctly represented the mental attitude in which he found himself after the Würzburg conversations. I confess that I am not satisfied with his own explanation that the whole letter is merely bantering. In fact under the circumstances the "bantering tone" itself requires explanation. It seems to me to be the letter of a man who is "hedging"—no doubt in a more or less jocose tone, but still with an undercurrent of serious meaning; and I cannot doubt that he was at this time waiting in the hope that the "master's" prophecies might turn out to be true, and thus after all enable him to believe in the Mahatmas. Had the prophecies been justified by the event, I believe that Mr. Solovyoff was prepared to accept Madame Blavatsky's explanations, that she had confessed under the influence of the

"black magician," or in order to satisfy the "master" by a test. In consenting to wait the two months, Mr. Solovyoff had in fact logically committed himself to take this position; he must have taken it more thoroughly, and been more deeply impressed by the prophecies, than he is now willing to admit to himself.

On this supposition the letter becomes intelligible. The inference which Madame Jelihovsky wishes us to draw, however, is that at this time Mr. Solovyoff, after his visit to Würzburg, was still a believer in Madame Blavatsky and her powers; but that shortly afterwards, disgusted that she would not initiate him into the higher occultism, he for the first time invented the whole of the Würzburg conversations by way of revenge. If he did so, he must have written his intentions to Madame Blavatsky before she wrote the "Confession," which evidently refers to them. How then are we to account for the fact that no letter has been produced in which he even hints at such a monstrous design? Madame Blavatsky must have been aware that in the struggle which was about to begin a letter even indirectly hinting at such a sudden change of attitude would have been an arm of inestimable value in her hands. Nor is the tone of the "Confession" that of a woman who has been

falsely accused. "You are driving me to desperation" is the burden of that remarkable document; but not "you are covering yourself with shame by your vile and baseless calumnies". It is far more natural that a man wavering between two opposite hypotheses, one of which he has reason to believe, the other of which he wishes to believe, should have written letter [B] than that a woman knowing herself to be falsely accused should have written the "Confession".

Thus though Mr. Solovyoff's letters give us a decidedly different picture of his mental attitude from that drawn by the narrative, I cannot see that either they or Madame Jelihovsky's statements can cast any material doubt on the truth of the facts which he states. In matters of verifiable fact, as distinct from mental attitude, he remains unshaken. In one or two small points indeed he has been convicted of error; but they are ludicrously irrelevant to the question at issue, and the fact that nothing more serious has been discovered in a narrative written seven years after the events which it describes, is to be regarded, considering the ordeal through which it has had to pass, as a strong testimony in favour of Mr. Solovyoff's accuracy.

I have endeavoured to examine Mr. Solo-

vyoff's evidence impartially on its own merits; but it must not be forgotten that it is only the last stone on a cairn. Those who have studied Mr. Hodgson's report will find in the Würzburg conversations only what they had already been taught to expect by overwhelming testimony with which Mr. Solovyoff had nothing to do. To the vast majority of sensible people, the question of Madame Blavatsky's honesty has been already so convincingly disposed of, as to remove any *a priori* doubts concerning the veracity of any person who declares her an impostor. For them the simple assertion of a gentleman in Mr. Solovyoff's position is sufficient; as he cannot add to the force of evidence already unanswered and unanswerable, so there can be no presumption against him when he adds to its variety. His narrative is in fact, as he himself calls it, a supplement to the damning act of accusation drawn up by the Committee on Theosophical Phenomena.

Finally I should like to express my sense of the extreme literary ability with which Mr. Solovyoff has drawn his picture. But for this literary charm I should hardly have cared to face the labour of translation; I trust that it may not have entirely perished in the rendering. In my own case—and I believe that the same will be felt by many others—Mr. Solovyoff has

rather raised than lowered my opinion of Madame Blavatsky. That she was an arch impostor I knew before; but my very slight acquaintance with her had not enabled me to grasp the secret of the fascination which she exercised over so many of those with whom she came in contact. Still less could the fabulous stories of her admirers explain the riddle. In translating the *Modern Priestess of Isis* I have for the first time felt that I could see her as a human being, and to some extent sympathise with her in the troubles—the self-made troubles—of her unique career. Whether his story be true or no, and I at least have no doubt of its substantial truth, Mr. Solovyoff has at all events given us a psychological study of extraordinary interest.

Mr. W. Emmette Coleman has kindly offered the Society for publication a summary of his analysis of the sources of Madame Blavatsky's theosophical writings. His conclusions so entirely confirm and expand what Mr. Solovyoff has said on this head that no apology is needed for the addition of his paper (Appendix C).

WALTER LEAF.

November, 1894.

A MODERN PRIESTESS OF ISIS.

I.

On May 8th (N.S.), 1891, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky died in London. She was known in Russia as the authoress of certain interesting and able stories, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, and *The Enigmatical Tribes of the Blue Mountains*, published in the *Russky Vyestnik* under the pseudonym of "Radda Bay".

But about her writings of another sort, and about her career in general, very little was known in Russia. A correspondence from London in the *Novoye Vremya* alluded to the exposure of the supposed miraculous phenomena which she produced. Recently too, indeed, after her death there was published in a professional journal, the *Review of Clinical and Forensic Psychiatry and Neuropathology*, a critical sketch by Dr. Rosenbach, entitled "Modern Mysticism". This sketch was also issued as a separate pamphlet. A whole chapter of it is headed "The Theosophical Cult," and is devoted to the investigation by the London Society for Psychical Research of the theosophical phenomena, and the exposure of their fraudulence.

The correspondence of the *Novoye Vremya* had been quite forgotten, and Dr. Rosenbach's essay was

known to few, so that the Russian public had a very scanty acquaintance with the career of the late Madame Blavatsky; when suddenly there appeared, first in a newspaper, the *Novosti*, and then in a magazine, the *Russkoe Obozrenie*, lengthy articles by Madame Jelihovsky. In these articles the writer, Madame Blavatsky's own sister, amazed at the silence of the Russian press about the creatress of theosophy, undertakes to introduce to our public a woman whom her followers in America, India and Europe call "a chosen torch," her enemies "the greatest impostor of the age"; whom all who are acquainted with her writings and her career for the last fifteen or twenty years regard as "the sphinx of the nineteenth century," and whose death was recorded by the whole of the foreign press.

It was also in the *Novosti*, it seems, that there was published some two years ago a long article by another lady contributor to this newspaper. In this article there was an account of life in Paris, and allusion was made to the Paris "Theosophical Society," as well as to the fact that it was broken up in consequence of revelations made by myself.

I do not deny the fact thus stated by the contributor to the *Novosti*. In fact, apart from Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's own family, I am the only Russian who knew her intimately and well in the period from 1884 to 1886, the period, that is, which followed her appearance in Europe from India and during which there started up the European "Theosophical Societies," organised by her and by her assistant, Henry Olcott, an American known by the title of "Colonel" Olcott. It is a fact that, in 1886,

I assisted in the breaking up of the first French Theosophical Society, which had been founded under the title of the "Société Théosophique d'Orient et d'Occident" by the Duchesse de Pomar, Lady Caithness, and had been confirmed by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in Paris in 1884.

Since my return to Russia to this day, I have not written a word about Madame Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society. I have held it worse than useless to allude to this anti-Christian movement, so long as it remained a matter which was little known in Russia. I kept to myself all I knew, and the documentary evidence I possessed, against the time when a panegyric of Madame Blavatsky might appear in the Russian press, and with it, in one form or another, the propaganda of her name and her newest theosophy. One thing only I desired: that such a time might never come, and that I might be absolved from the moral duty of again alluding to the question.

Hitherto it has been possible for me to keep silence. But the lengthy articles of Madame Jelihovsky, in which she proclaims her sister, not without grounds, a universal celebrity, and speaks of the "new religion" preached and created by her as a "pure and lofty" doctrine, are in fact the propaganda in Russia of this "pure and lofty" doctrine, and of the name of its apostle.

These articles on our famous countrywoman whom we did not appreciate enough, and on the world-wide importance and dissemination of her doctrines, cannot but interest our public, credulous as it is, and prone to every sort of "new doctrine".

"Churls are lords beyond the mountains," ["a beau mentir qui vient de loin"] and as one reads Madame Jelihovsky's articles, a most attractive picture is in fact presented, a picture calculated to fire the imagination thirsting for every novelty, especially if it promises satisfaction to our highest spiritual interest.

In these circumstances to keep silence and to hide the truth, if one knows it, becomes a crime. I therefore find myself compelled to break silence about my intimate knowledge of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her society. This is to me most painful and repugnant, as it must be painful and repugnant to any man who is obliged, even for the holiest object, to break open a tomb and to bring forth the corpse hidden in it. Moreover, in addition to pain and reluctance, I cannot rid myself of the feeling of pity which was always inspired in me by this woman, who was in any case beyond the common, and richly endowed by nature.

Because of this involuntary feeling of pity I should be only too glad to forget all I know. Oblivion, complete oblivion, that is the one thing which is now to be desired for Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. But for her there is neither oblivion nor death, though her body was destroyed by cremation in London, and her ashes are preserved in three urns. For her there is no death, so we are told in print by her own sister, whose articles are at this moment the only reason which forces upon me the moral necessity of turning to those painful and repugnant reminiscences, and publishing the bundle of documents which I have preserved.

Unhappy Helena Petrovna! I see her before me as though she were alive; but her picture is not only a double one, it is treble. There were in her three perfectly different persons. There was indeed a fourth person in her, but that is one which I never knew personally, and only the last extremity will force me to touch on it in what follows. There are still alive many who knew her in her youth and her mature years; and wonderful tales they tell about the adventures of her stormy and wandering life.

I made her acquaintance at a time when, for her, the "woman's life" was over, and she had started on a period of very different activity. The end of this stormy "woman's life" proved for her to be no end such as it generally is with ordinary women, but only the beginning of her real existence, and of the manifestation of all the gifts which nature had bestowed upon her.

As I know her, she is elderly and ill, but full of fire and energy; I cannot imagine her otherwise. As I have said, there were in her three persons. The first of these was "Helena Petrovna" on her quiet days, far away from the business of the Theosophical Society, a cheerful, witty companion, with an inexhaustible store of rough but real humour, of narratives, interesting, though, alas! by no means always founded on strict truth, and of anecdotes; droll and sympathetic, with a sort of magnetic attraction, and even capable of good impulses.

Her second character was that of "Radda Bay," H. P. Blavatsky, or H. P. B.; the author of the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan, The Enigmatical Tribes, Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine, The Key to Theo-*

sophy; the editor of the *Theosophist, Lucifer,* etc.; a writer wonderful for her literary talent, her immense memory, and her power of rapidly grasping the most heterogeneous subjects and writing on them at will; writing interestingly and attractively, though often disconnectedly and with digressions in every direction.

If the writings of Madame Blavatsky had been, as Madame Jelihovsky says, the work of her mysterious teacher, a mighty sage, half god, living in the dales of Thibet and dictating to her, in complete indifference to distance, when she was in America or Europe, they would have done but little credit, in view of their imperfections, to such a sage. To her, who in her youth had but ill acquired the rudiments of elementary education, and till she was forty—I speak again on her sister's authority—had learnt but little, they do the greatest credit; they prove her immense capabilities, and her ardent love of work, thanks to which she was able to forget, as I myself saw, the grievous sufferings of the various diseases which for long tormented her.

In this respect her writings are really a miracle; but the explanation of this miracle we must seek in the secrets of the human intellect and soul, not in any invisible and problematical "Mahatma," dictating to her and guiding her hand from Thibet, nor in the aerial transmission of the books which she needed for reference. But to all this I shall return in its proper place, as well as to the question of what her doctrine is, whether it is hers at all, and how she came to declare herself its apostle.

The third character of H. P Blavatsky, behind

which, unfortunately, the two others have but too often been hidden and vanished from sight, is that of "Madame," as all the theosophists, without distinction of nationality, used to call her, the foundress of the Theosophical Society and its mistress, the *femme aux phénomènes.*

When she comes to deal with the phenomena, Madame Jelihovsky says in her articles that Madame Blavatsky herself "personally despised these marvels"; but that her followers attest them, orally and in print, with the greatest confidence. "The best of those who surrounded her did not value her for them, and she herself, especially in the later years of her life, referred to them with contempt, saying that they were the least important work of forces known to every conjuring fakir. Many of the 'Reminiscences,' published by those who knew her best, show how often she stopped with irritation the curiosity of her numerous outside visitors."

Alas, it is not so. The whole question lies precisely in the phenomena. It was with their help that H. P. Blavatsky founded her Theosophical Society, they were her panoply when she appeared in Europe to disseminate her doctrine, by them she advertised herself and gathered about her those who for one purpose or another wished to see them. It was these phenomena *only* which interested and brought into her circle of acquaintance such men as Crookes, Flammarion, Charles Richet and the English savants who had established the London Society for Psychical Research.

These phenomena were, unhappily, indissolubly

bound up alike with her and with her Theosophical Society, as will be shown later. In them might have been her real strength, and in them was shown her weakness. Through them she morally ruined herself and many others, for them she tortured and enraged herself, deadened her own soul and heart, grew into a fury, and was compelled to endure everything about which Madame Jelihovsky is silent.

When these phenomena were exposed, as will be clearly proved hereafter, by many proofs, particularly by the original proofs and documents of the London Society for Psychical Research, Madame Blavatsky thought herself lost. What was to be expected by a woman who had taken for her motto, "There is no religion higher than truth"—a motto which was printed even on her note-paper and envelopes—and had established the most important positions of her doctrine by phenomena which proved to be undoubtedly and incontestably the coarsest and most shocking deceit and trickery? It seemed that she was right in considering herself lost.

But the fact is that in human society there is always a multitude of men for whom truth is truth only when it agrees with their own wishes. Those who in one way or another were interested in the success of the Theosophical Society, and moreover felt themselves compromised, began to cry out that the famous "emissary of the Thibetan Mahatmas" was calumniated; and at the same time they did not stick at any calumny, even the vilest, in order so far as they could to blacken and crush her "enemies,"

those, that is to say, who had not allowed themselves to be duped by her.

Not a few of those who hunger and thirst after fresh pastures made no attempt to inquire into Madame Blavatsky's record, and joined her flock. She thus found that she was not lost at all. She defended herself, and set about continuing and even widening her career, save only in respect to phenomena, which she renounced; they, it would seem, were a "vain expenditure of vital force," "nonsensical manifestations," and so on.

But now, when Madame Blavatsky is no more, and it is consequently no longer possible to convince oneself of her phenomena in person, "Colonel" Olcott marches out once more, at the head of a whole regiment of persons of both sexes, who attest the most astounding miracles as having been wrought by "Madame". Even Madame Jelihovsky cannot refrain from addressing the Russian public on the subject of these miracles, and telling strange stories about them.

In view of all this I too feel it to be my bounden duty to publish for general information the "astounding phenomena" of which it has been my fortune to be a witness. "There is no religion higher than truth;" so the unhappy Helena Petrovna said, wrote, and printed on her letter-paper and her envelopes.

II.

In May, 1884, I was living in Paris, and planning some works, bellettristic or otherwise, which should touch on certain little-known subjects; on the rare, but in my opinion real, manifestations of the imperfectly investigated spiritual powers of man. I was occupied, among other things, with mystic and so-called "occultist" literature.

As I was going through my notes from the Bibliothèque Nationale, there came into my mind the very interesting narratives of Radda Bay, in other words of Madame Blavatsky, published in the *Russky Vyestnik* under the title of *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, which had been read with so much interest in Russia. The subject of my studies was closely connected with the essential motive of these narratives.

"Should I not make up my mind in earnest?" I thought. "Should I not start for India, to see our wonderful countrywoman, Madame Blavatsky, and convince myself in person as to how far the marvels of which she speaks are in accordance with fact?"

Just at this time a friend showed me a copy of the *Matin*, and there, among the news of the day, was an announcement that the famous foundress of the Theosophical Society, H. P. Blavatsky, was in Europe; that a day or two before she had arrived

in Paris from Nice; that she had settled in Rue Notre Dame des Champs, and would there receive any one who was interested in the theosophical movement which she had set on foot. It was but a short note; but two or three phrases sketched out to me the surroundings of the newly-arrived celebrity, to whose temple were flocking from all sides those who were thirsting to become acquainted with her and her marvels.

I immediately wrote to St. Petersburg to Mr. P., who, as I knew, was in correspondence with Madame Blavatsky. I begged him to acquaint her at once with the fact that a certain resident in Paris would like to make her acquaintance, but would not do so till he had first received her assent.

A few days after, much sooner than I could have expected, I received an answer from St. Petersburg, informing me that H. P. Blavatsky expected me, and would receive me whenever I liked.

It was not without some emotion that I went to Rue Notre Dame des Champs, selecting an hour which I thought would be the most suitable, not too early and not very late. During the time when I was awaiting my reply from St. Petersburg I had quite electrified myself with the idea of the interesting acquaintance which I was about to make.

Though I had not in my possession the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, I remembered it from beginning to end, and felt all the fascination of this skilful narrative, which combines realism with the most wonderful mystery.

From the impression produced upon me by the little notice in the *Matin*, I expected to see

something which in many ways would be magnificent, and had prepared myself for the solemn audience which Madame Blavatsky would vouchsafe me. I was convinced that I should find a row of carriages at her door, and that I should present myself in the midst of a great and varied company of her visitors.

But I found myself in a long mean street on the left bank of the Seine, *de l'autre côté de l'eau* as the Parisians say. The coachman stopped at the number I had told him. The house was unsightly enough to look at, and at the door there was not a single carriage.

"My dear sir, you have let her slip; she has left Paris," I said to myself with vexation.

In answer to my inquiry the concierge showed me the way. I climbed a very, very dark staircase, rang, and a slovenly figure in an Oriental turban admitted me into a tiny dark lobby.

To my question, whether Madame Blavatsky would receive me, the slovenly figure replied with an "Entrez, monsieur," and vanished with my card, while I was left to wait in a small low room, poorly and insufficiently furnished.

I had not long to wait. The door opened, and she was before me; a rather tall woman, though she produced the impression of being short, on account of her unusual stoutness. Her great head seemed all the greater from her thick and very bright hair, touched with a scarcely perceptible grey, and very slightly frizzed, by nature and not by art, as I subsequently convinced myself.

At the first moment her plain, old, earthy-

coloured face struck me as repulsive; but she fixed on me the gaze of her great, rolling, pale blue eyes, and in these wonderful eyes, with their hidden power, all the rest was forgotten.

I remarked, however, that she was very strangely dressed, in a sort of black sacque, and that all the fingers of her small, soft, and as it were boneless hands, with their slender points and long nails, were covered with great jewelled rings.

She received me so simply, affectionately and kindly, it was so pleasant to me to hear her Russian talk, that my disappointment passed off, and all the unexpectedness of the surroundings ceased to surprise me; on the contrary, I was very pleased to find something quite different from what I had looked for.

At the end of a quarter of an hour I was talking to Helena Petrovna as though she were an old friend, and all her homely coarse appearance actually began to please me. And her eyes gazed at me so graciously, and at the same time pierced me so attentively.

I explained to her that it was not mere idle curiosity that had brought me to her; that I was busied with mystic and occult literature, and had come for an answer to many questions of the greatest seriousness and importance to myself.

"Whatever it was that brought you to me," she said, "I am excessively glad to make your acquaintance—you see I am a Russian—and if you come on serious business besides, you may be sure that I shall be entirely at your service. Where I can, I will help you with the greatest delight."

As she spoke, she laughed with a good-humoured kindly laugh.

"You will have to begin at the A B C, Helena Petrovna. All I know about yourself, your work and your society is what you have yourself published in the *Russky Vyestnik.*"

"Well, my little father," she went on, "since that day 'much water has flowed down'. At that time our society had hardly hatched out from its egg; but now!"

Then she began eagerly to tell me of the successes of the theosophical movement in America and India, and, in the immediate past, in Europe as well.

"Are you here for long?" I asked.

"I do not know myself yet; the master sent me."

"What master?"

"My master, the teacher, my Guru; you may call him Gulab Lal Singh, from the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan.*"

I remembered this Gulab Lal Singh in every detail; the mysterious being of whom she had told her Russian readers such incredible stories, a being who had attained the highest degree of human knowledge, and produced the most marvellous phenomena. I felt at once that the ground was shaking beneath my feet. I have no fear of anybody's smile when I declare that I then admitted and still admit the *possibility* of the existence, wherever it may be, in the caves and jungles of Hindostan if you will, of such a man, whose knowledge far surpasses all that is known to our modern science. If I had known for certain that such a man cannot exist, I could only, after her first words about the

"master," have continued the conversation with the aim of revealing her falsehood and deception. But at that time I was far from having any such aim.

Helena Petrovna spoke of this master of hers with entire simplicity, as though of a most ordinary phenomenon. Still, in spite of all, I immediately felt something, a sort of intangible falsehood; it was as though I had had a douche of cold water.

"Helena Petrovna," I said, "listen to me, and if you have the power of gazing into a man and seeing him as he really is, you may convince yourself how far my words are serious. I come to you in all honesty, without any mental reservations, with a great spiritual problem; I come to you to obtain the fulfilment of what you promise, of the allurements you hold out in your *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan.* If you can answer this my spiritual question seriously, promise me to do so; if you cannot or will not, it shall be all the same, we will remain friends, as fellow-countrymen and brothers of the pen, but let there be no more talk between us of all your marvels or of your Theosophical Society."

She did not answer me at once, but gazed into my eyes enigmatically and long with her bright magnetic gaze, and then solemnly said, "I can," and stretched me out her hand.

"Excuse me," she said, getting up; "I will be back in a second, but I must tell Babula, my servant, the Hindu who opened the door to you, to see about my dinner—not that I am hungry."

She went out, and came back again in two or three minutes.

"Now, my good fellow-countryman, my dear Mr. Vsevolod Sergyeevich," she began with a friendly smile as she sat before me, "sure enough you do not believe me, but all the same when once I have said, 'I can,' that means that I can and will. It is true—believe it or not, as you like—that I knew you before P. wrote to me, I knew that you were being drawn towards me. Listen."

She made a sort of flourish with her hand, raised it upwards, and suddenly, I heard distinctly, quite distinctly, somewhere above our heads, near the ceiling, a very melodious sound like a little silver bell or an Æolian harp.

"What is the meaning of this?" I asked.

"This means only that my master is here, although you and I cannot see him. He tells me that I may trust you, and am to do for you whatever I can. *Vous êtes sous sa protection*, henceforth and for ever."

She looked me straight in the eyes, and caressed me with her glance and her kindly smile.

"So there, sir."

I involuntarily liked her more and more. I was attracted to her by a feeling of instantaneous sympathy, and yet, if her "master" was really present, and could penetrate the inmost nature of things and of human thoughts, *il ne m'aurait pas pris sous sa protection*, for I was asking myself all the time: "Why was the sound of the silver bell not heard at once, but only after she had left the room and come back again?"

"Do you speak English?" she asked me.

"Unfortunately, no. I once took lessons in the language, but now I have almost forgotten it."

"What a pity! Well, we must get on without it somehow, and you can set about learning it."

"Yes, certainly."

I here purposely indicate my ignorance of the English language, which I to some extent exaggerated as I did not wish to embarrass anybody by my imperfect pronunciation and my blunders. This ignorance, as will appear in the course of my narrative, far from being an impediment to me—for all the time of my connexion with the Theosophical Society I could get on perfectly with Russian, French and German—actually rendered me the greatest service, as it brought me into a position of isolation, and besides, at certain important moments, enabled me to give myself up to undisturbed observation. But I have no wish to anticipate.

"Stay, I will introduce you at once to Mohini, a young Brahmin who has come here with me," said Helena Petrovna. "He is a 'chela,' a disciple of another Mahatma, Koot Hoomi by name, an ascetic sage like my master, but much more communicative."

"Mohini," she cried; and in a moment the door of the next room opened, and gave admission to a rather strange young man. From his appearance he seemed to be not more than from twenty-five to twenty-seven years of age. His figure, which was narrow-shouldered and not tall, was clad in a black cashmere cassock; his thick blue-black wavy hair fell to his shoulders. The upper part of his bronze face was strikingly handsome—a wise forehead, not very high, straight eyebrows, not too thick, and most

magnificent velvety eyes with a deep and gentle expression. Later on I saw a very different glance from these eyes, but now they were deep and gentle. It was only his nose, straight but too broad, and his thick dark blue lips, projecting through a not over-abundant growth of moustache and beard, which prevented his being perfectly beautiful. In any case his appearance might be considered very attractive, and several female hearts in Asia and Europe could tell tales of the beauty of this young apostle of the newest theosophy.

Madame Blavatsky raised her hand, and Mohini bowed himself to the earth and almost crawled as though to receive her blessing. She laid her hand upon his head, he raised himself and bowed to me with the greatest courtesy.

I put out my hand to him, but he shrank from me, and said, with a low bow: "Excuse me, sir, I may not".

"What does this mean? Why cannot he take my hand?" I asked Helena Petrovna.

"Why, there is no helping it," explained she; "you see, he is a chela, just the same as a monk, an ascetic, you understand; he has to keep off all earthly influences; do you know, he never so much as looks at a woman?"

"That no doubt one can understand, but as for refusing to take men's hands ——"

"He has acquired a very delicate organisation, he feels too much the influence of human magnetism, which can be transmitted by too close intercourse, by the touch of a hand or a kiss; so he refrains from it, in order to keep himself perfectly free."

Mohini stood looking now at me, and now at Helena Petrovna.

From the chelas of the Mahatmas she passed on to her own Theosophical Society.

"First of all you must know," she said, "that the aim of our universal brotherhood is perfectly devoid of any political character, and that the society in no way interferes with the religious or other convictions of its members. Our problems are purely scientific, we bring back from darkness and oblivion the mighty and ancient doctrines of the East, which leave behind all which modern European science knows, and of which it is so proud. Our society undermines and destroys mean materialistic science, and shows all its folly and inconsistency. Only look; all this 'civilised world' is decaying and perishing from want of faith. On one hand the materialism of so-called science, on the other the revolting conduct of the clergy, the Catholic clergy, have led all into infidelity. We bring them, not to believe, but to know, the immortality of the soul, and what man can attain to, even on earth, by the purification and education of the 'inner man'. Look at me; I am by no means a saint; I am far from being one, little father! But still I know and can do a good deal. You heard the silver bell; you shall hear and see still more, if you only wish."

"Of course I wish, Helena Petrovna."

"Why, that is right. Only, please, my good sir, do not look at me in that suspicious way; you know you have come to me in earnest, the master says so, and he cannot err; so you must just put your suspiciousness in your pocket, and wait; all will

come in good time, and you will be ashamed of this European suspiciousness of yours. How many savants, unbelievers, materialists, yes, and thoroughly convinced ones, have come to me, with just this same *bon ton* suspicion of yours, and have gone away quite *mauvais ton*, believing everything, thanking me and calling me the saviour of their souls! What good is their gratitude to me? But if, out of a man defiled with all the abominations of life, theosophy makes an all but sinless saint, that, I fancy, is not so bad."

She continued to explain to me the meaning of her society, and from her words it appeared to be a really beneficent and intensely interesting institution. The inexhaustible treasure of ancient doctrines, hitherto jealously guarded in the mysterious sanctuaries of India by the sage Raj-yogas, and completely unknown to the civilised world, was now, thanks to her communications with the Mahatmas and their confidence in her, being revealed to Europeans. The world was to be renovated by the true knowledge of the forces of nature. This knowledge could not disturb the conscience of the Christian, for even if it could not be explained by the Christian creed, at least it did not contradict it.

"And have you remained a Christian yourself?" I asked.

"No, I never was one," replied Madame Blavatsky. "Until my regeneration, till the time when I became a wholly, wholly new creature, I never thought of religion of any sort. So I was obliged solemnly to embrace Buddhism, and entered into it with all its rites. I do not attempt to conceal the fact, and do

not attribute any importance to it; that is all external; in the essence of the matter I am just as much a Buddhist as I am a Christian or a Mahometan. My religion is truth, for there is no religion higher than truth."

"Then would you advise me also, pray, to embrace Buddhism, on the ground that there is no religion higher than truth?" I interrupted with a smile.

"There you are with your pin again," said she also with a smile; "pray be so good as to go on pricking. You see how fat I am, I don't feel it. Don't make fun, you are such a mocker. The question is not one of words, but once again, of truth."

"Madam, I obey."

I had remained too long already, and so took my leave.

"Now you will come back again? When?"

"When you command me."

"Then I command you to come back every day if you like. Make the most of me while I am here, you will never be in my way; if I want to work, I will tell you so, I shall not stand upon ceremony. Come and see me to-morrow."

"To-morrow is impossible, but I will come the day after, with your permission."

"Come rather earlier," she called out to me, when I was already in the lobby and Babula was opening the door on to the staircase.

I went home with a somewhat confused impression. All this was certainly not what I had calculated on. Yet what was it that did not satisfy me? was it the *réclame* in the *Matin*, Madame Blavatsky's poor surroundings, and the complete absence of visitors?

I certainly could not approve this *réclame*, inserted, if not by herself, then, in all probability, by the efforts of one of her nearest friends and associates, with the obvious intention of attracting the absent visitors, and spreading her notoriety in Paris.

Still in any case the obscurity and solitude in which she was living proved nothing in themselves, and as for myself, it was much more agreeable and satisfactory to be able to pay her numerous and long visits without interruption.

What she said was interesting, but so far it was only words. As for her silver bell, that looked like a trick; but so far I had no right to suspect her of such cold-blooded deceit, such shocking and cruel mockery of the soul of man.

And herself? How came it that this old, ill-favoured woman had such a power of attraction? How could this peculiar humorous good-nature and simplicity be combined in her with the sort of painful mystery hidden in her wonderful eyes?

However that might be, though I was thoroughly dissatisfied, I felt one thing: that I was drawn to her, that I was interested in her, and that I should look forward with impatience to the hour when I should see her again.

The fact is that my Parisian solitude, however good for sick nerves, was evidently overdone; Madame Blavatsky appeared as the one fresh and living interest in this lonely life.

III.

In two days I did in fact go to see Helena Petrovna, and, at her request, a good deal earlier, that is to say, between eleven and twelve. I again found her alone, in the complete quiet of her little lodgings. She was sitting in the same black sacque, her hands sparkling with diamonds, emeralds and rubies, and she was smoking and playing patience.

"Welcome, welcome,"—she rose a little to meet me, and held out her hand; "please take a chair and come and sit here, a little nearer. I am amusing myself with a little patience, it is my favourite occupation."

I felt as though, from this Indian miracle-worker, in this Rue Notre Dame des Champs, there came a fragrant atmosphere of an old-fashioned Russian country house. This American Buddhist, who had been away from Russia God knows how many years, who had dissipated her life in unknown parts, among unknown people, was an incarnation of the type of the old-time Russian country lady of moderate means, grown stout in her farm-house. Her every movement, her every gesture and word were full of the true "Russian spirit," which it would seem all the Mahatmas in the world cannot drive out where once it is firmly settled. I quite expected the door to open, and some such housekeeper as

Matrena Spiridonovna to come in for her mistress's orders. The door did open; but in came the slovenly Babula with his turban and his ugly roguish face.

He gave Helena Petrovna a letter in silence. She asked me to excuse her, opened it and glanced through it, and I could see by her face that she was pleased. She even forgot her patience, and carelessly mixed up the cards. She began to talk about her "universal brotherhood," and captivated me by her account of the interesting materials accessible to members of the "society" who wished to acquaint themselves with the most ancient literary monuments of the East, hitherto unseen by European eyes. When she had sufficiently aroused my curiosity and my desire for knowledge, she exclaimed: "My God, what wonderful, what amazing subjects for a novelist or a poet! It is an inexhaustible spring! If I were to show you ever so little of this treasure, your eyes would start out of your head, you would clutch at it."

"And is it then impossible thus to clutch at it?" I asked.

"For you it is impossible; you are a European, and the Hindus, even the most advanced, the wisest, cannot make up their minds to trust the Europeans."

"In that case, what becomes of the 'universal' brotherhood?"

"The brotherhood is founded precisely in order to do away with this want of confidence; the members of the Theosophical Society cannot mistrust one another; they are all brothers, to whatever religion and race they belong. Of course, all will be opened

to you, all our materials, if you become a theosophist."

"Whether I shall ever become a theosophist I do not know; for in order to make up my mind to it, it is essential that I should learn myself, in my own person, just what it is that you mean by this wide and lofty name; but as your society is nothing secret, and as it is neither religious in any sectarian sense, nor political, but purely scientific and literary, I do not see why I should not become a member, when you have explained its constitution."

"Ah, how kind you are, indeed," exclaimed Madame Blavatsky, brightening up; "I, as you know, am never importunate, and if you had not yourself expressed the desire, I should never have proposed it. But now it is splendid. Now, my dear friend, you have untied my hands, and without arousing the surprise of the theosophists as well as the indignation of my Hindus, such as Mohini, I can initiate you into all our studies. But this is all in the future, we have not yet got to studies. The first thing is to ratify and properly organise the 'Paris branch of the Theosophical Society'."

"Then is one already in existence?"

"Yes, it has existed nominally for the last two years; a few people meet in the house of a certain duchess *plus* lady, who likes to call herself 'Présidente de la Société Théosophique d'Orient et d'Occident'. God bless her, let her call herself what she likes, she is rich, and has a superb hotel of her own here in Paris; that is no objection; she may be useful. But we must have it all properly organised."

She took up a printed copy of the rules of the

Theosophical Society lying on the table, and I went through it with her from the first word to the last. From these rules I could not but assure myself that the society actually enjoined on its members not to interfere with the consciences of others, to respect the beliefs of their brethren, and not to touch on religion or politics. Every member was bound to strive for his own moral perfection, and all had to help one another, both spiritually, and so far as possible materially. As for the scientific work of the society, there stood in the foreground the study of the Aryan and other Oriental literatures, and the remains of ancient knowledge and belief, and also the investigation of the little-known laws of nature and the spiritual powers of man.

Finding that there was nothing whatever in these rules which could be considered in any way prejudicial, I repeated that I was ready to join the society.

"So then it is decided," said Helena Petrovna; "we must not put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day. Mohini! Keightley!" she cried.

Mohini and Keightley entered, and initiated me into the society, teaching me the password.

The password consisted of certain movements of the fingers and some perfectly disconnected words. With great seriousness they made me repeat this abracadabra several times over. I then paid my member's subscription, handing over a pound sterling, and obtaining a receipt. Mohini bowed to me and smiled. Keightley shook my hand warmly, and congratulated me on my entrance into the society. They were so serious, and both of them,

especially Keightley, were so like children carried away by a game, that my "initiation" seemed to me like a silly joke of my own, which left behind it a sort of feeling of shame and even of repugnance.

But there was worse to come. Mohini, now acknowledging me as his brother, and evidently wishing to interest me, began to tell me about his "guru," Mahatma Koot Hoomi, and how he had that morning had the honour of receiving a letter from him, containing replies to questions put by himself alone. The letter had not come by post at all, but had fallen right on Mohini's head.

The Hindu spoke of this phenomenon with the greatest reverence; but, far from believing it, I only felt a longing to get out at once into a purer atmosphere.

IV.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY, in an article in the *Russkoe Obozrenie* for December, 1891, makes statements such as these:—

"Every day there were masses of visitors. Helena Petrovna had time to work only in the early morning from six o'clock to the midday *déjeuner*, and all the day passed in receptions and bustle. She was besieged by a motley society, but all from the intelligent classes. A crowd of French legitimists and imperialists paid her court at that time, men of science, doctors, professors, psychiatrists and magnetisers in multitude, from all parts of the world as well as on the spot. Doctor Charcot was not then in Paris, but Richet and Combré, his assistants, were devoted to her; Flammarion used to come very often, and Leymarie, the editor of the *Revue Spirite;* the old magnetiser Evette, the friend of Baron du Potet, constantly rivalled Olcott in his cures of the sick. There was a multitude of Russians, both men and women, and all alike presented themselves in friendship and as seekers after knowledge."

To this I reply that for about two months, up to the very moment of her departure from Paris for London, I used to see her almost every day, for long periods and at different hours; and I never saw anything whatever which remotely resembled this

brilliant picture. The *réclame* in the *Matin* did not seem to be worth what it had cost; it entirely failed, like many others of the same sort, to attract attention. At that time the "intelligent classes" of Paris were satisfied with their official governmental materialism, so to speak. Those who openly or secretly still believed in the Catholic Church could certainly not visit Madame Blavatsky, for she had published with the coarseness and frankness of expression peculiar to her writings the most frightful truths and falsehoods about the doings of the Catholic clergy. The spiritists shunned her as a traitress, for, after having herself been a spiritist and medium, she had not only abandoned spiritism, but had outraged their most sacred beliefs. The more or less interested "occultists," such for instance as St. Ives, stood entirely aloof, and would not on any account have appeared to pay her their respects.

These were the first days and the first steps of the new Buddhism in Europe, and there were as yet no signs that it would become a phenomenon with which, perhaps, it will soon be necessary to reckon. There was about Madame Blavatsky a group of persons who endeavoured, and it must be said with very little success, to bring their friends. Far from any one "paying court" or "devoting himself," she was in fact greatly disappointed by the extremely mediocre success of the cause.

When I was once or twice cruel enough to touch on this sore spot, she used to turn livid, and presented a terrible figure in her black sacque, *à la magicienne noire*. "Fools!" she used to say; "they

are all befouled with their materialism, and wallow in it like hogs. Well, just wait; in the long run my theosophy will get hold of them all the same."

[Mr. Solovyoff goes on to give a complete list of those who had anything to do with the Theosophical Society and Madame Blavatsky at this period. The list includes also very vivacious descriptions of the various persons concerned; but we think it necessary to translate only those which deal with characters of importance to the following narrative, or which will have special interest for English readers.]

The secretary of the Paris Theosophical Society was Madame Emilie de Morsier, a niece of the well-known Swiss philosopher and theologian, Ernest Naville. She was at that time a lady of forty, tall and very stout, a blonde who had faded early, though she still retained traces of great beauty. At our first meetings we somehow felt a mutual antipathy; but subsequently, after Madame Blavatsky's departure, we drew together gradually, and to this day I count this noble, wise and gifted woman, as well as her husband and family, among my true friends.

Madame de Morsier is a good musician and a first-rate singer. In her youth she dreamt of an artistic career, and if her dream had been destined to realisation, she would now have been a great celebrity. But family prejudices, hard as the stones of the Swiss mountains, forbade her the opportunity of devoting herself to art. This was the great sorrow of her life. Richly endowed by nature, she

could not reconcile herself to the dull part of lady of the house to a ruined nobleman. She gave herself up to literature, and above all to a life of beneficence. Always occupied with her prisons, hospitals and asylums, she read and wrote much at the same time; she was interested and attracted by many things, and to all of them she brought energy, a brilliant intellect, unusual knowledge, and the genius of a real born orator.

Dissatisfied with the dryness of the Protestant sectarianism in which she had been born and educated, shunning Papacy, and well acquainted with the various abuses of militant Catholicism, she fancied that she could find satisfaction for her spiritual thirst in the doctrines of the "Thibetan Mahatmas" as preached by the mouths of Madame Blavatsky and her collaborators, Olcott and Sinnett. She sent to Helena Petrovna in India a letter the passion and eloquence of which could not but interest the apostle of the new Buddhism; Helena Petrovna instantly seized upon this richly gifted woman, who was capable of rendering the "cause" no slight help in the future.

Madame de Morsier received from "Madame" a friendly missive, and some dried rose petals—the "occult" gift, and, so to speak, the benediction, of Mahatma Koot Hoomi to his interesting proselyte. When Madame Blavatsky came to Paris, Madame de Morsier, with her talisman, the rose leaves, on her heart, came of course to the front, and became the most active and eager member of the Theosophical Society. She proved herself in fact the real head and soul of the society, in the character of its secretary.

But the predominant characteristic of this lady was her complete sincerity and her unshakable truthfulness; and so, when two years later she was herself a witness, and obtained incontrovertible proofs, of "theosophical impostures" and of a great deal besides, she did not for one moment hesitate to admit that she had been led astray and duped. She fell seriously ill with the shock; but with a firm hand she burnt her Koot Hoomi talismanic rose, my complete disrespect to which had previously been the cause of some coldness between us.

Madame de Morsier and I were the most constant visitors at the lodgings in the Rue Notre Dame des Champs, and the most intimate with their mistress, as can easily be shown by Madame Blavatsky's autograph letters to us.

Madame Jelihovsky writes: "Doctor Charcot was not then in Paris; but Richet and Combré, his assistants, were very intimate with her". Why she should mention Charcot, who was not there, I do not know; but with regard to Richet she falls into a great blunder. Charcot has indeed an assistant at the Salpêtrière, Dr. Paul Richer, who has written a large and rather interesting work, *Etudes Cliniques sur l'Hystéro-épilepsie ou Grande Hystérie;* but he too, probably, "was not in Paris at the time". Madame Jelihovsky does not mean him at all, but one of the ablest French men of science of the day, Charles Richet, whose works have attained great celebrity in Russia also; but Charles Richet is in no sense an assistant of Charcot. He "came," not "used to come," to see Helena Petrovna, but as for being "devoted to her," he never even dreamed of it.

This is what he wrote to me at the end of December, 1885: "... Pour ma part j'avais des doutes énormes. Avant d'admettre l'extraordinaire, il faut se méfier de l'ordinaire, qui est la fourberie: et de toutes les garanties scientifiques, la certitude morale et la confiance est la plus efficace. Mais quelle dure ironie que cette Mad. B., qui fonde une religion, comme Mahomet, avec les mêmes moyens à peu près! Peut-être réussira-t-elle. En tout cas ce ne sera ni votre faute ni la mienne. Il faut je crois en revenir à l'opinion des vieux auteurs—observer et expérimenter—et ne pas écouter les dames qui ont passé sept ans au Thibet. . . ." So it seems, clearly enough.

As for Combré, when he was a student of medicine he certainly heard Charcot's lectures, and heard them attentively; but he never was, and never could be, his assistant, for life has attracted him in quite another direction. All his scientific work consists in a small and quite technical dissertation on *The Hypodermic Injection of Mercury*. Though he is a doctor of medicine, he has no official position, and does not practise.

Jules Baissac, a highly respected old gentleman, a learned linguist, and a master of the Russian language among others, has the official position of sworn interpreter to the Paris Court of Appeal. His name enjoys the respect of French scholars. He has published some learned and thorough investigations into ancient faiths, and as a specialist was interested in the Theosophical Society, to which he was introduced by his old friend Madame de Morsier.

Camille Flammarion I saw once only at Madame

Blavatsky's; he did not attend the lectures. He looked and listened, but Helena Petrovna could not interest him; her fancies and hypotheses did not rise to the level of the daring hypotheses and fancies of the talented author of *Lumen* and *Uranie*.

There was a middle-aged Russian lady, having the title of "maid of honour," Miss A. This is not the initial of her real name, but as she has carefully concealed her *faits et gestes*, and as she is thus spoken of in the *Proceedings of the London Society for Psychical Research*,[1] I shall also call her A out of respect for her wishes. Miss A was at that time a friend of Madame de Morsier, and through her took an interest in the Theosophical Society. She was continually surrounded by "phenomena" and miracles of all sorts; her marvellous stories of what happened to her at every step were enough to make one's head swim. She did not live in Russia, and had lodgings in Paris; but she was continually vanishing, no one knew where, and was generally absorbed in some very complicated and intricate affairs of her own. I have now for a long time lost sight of her.

The whole list of those whom I saw there amounts to thirty-one persons; we will say thirty-five in case I may have omitted some few who were, whether generally or at that time, mute or invisible characters.

Several of these persons only gleamed and vanished. Others were attracted chiefly through Madame de Morsier. Such is the real picture of the Paris Theosophical Society as it appeared in the summer of

[1] [In Mr. Solovyoff's communication, vol. iii., p. 393. She is not to be confused with the "Miss A" of more recent papers.]

1884. It was a small circle of ladies, and nothing more.

If there had been any one else whom I did not see or know of, Helena Petrovna, when provoked by my remarks on the slowness with which the cause progressed, would infallibly have told me of the people whom I did not know, and pointed them out to me; and besides, her efforts would infallibly have brought them to the meetings, the very scanty attendance at which greatly depressed the foundress of the society.

Where are the "crowds" which "besieged" Helena Petrovna, as Madame Jelihovsky assures us? Where is the "multitude of French legitimists and imperialists" who "paid their court" to her? Where are the "numerous men of science, doctors, professors, psychiatrists, magnetisers, from all parts of the world as well as on the spot"? Where is the "multitude of Russians, both men and women, who urgently offered themselves in friendship, and as followers of the doctrine"?

Surely there should be some difference between writing "stories for light reading," and writing a "biographical sketch" of a woman who is called a universal celebrity, who set on foot a movement which is a "wonder of the world," and with whose "pure and lofty doctrine" the Russian public is to be seduced.

But this is only the first bud; later on we shall find plenty of big fruits of a different and quite unexpected sort.

V.

When I arrived two days later at the lodgings in Rue Notre Dame des Champs, Helena Petrovna came to meet me, and proclaimed: "Olcott has come. You shall see him at once."

And I saw the "colonel," Madame Blavatsky's trusty companion and fellow-labourer, the president of the Theosophical Society. His appearance produced on me at once a very favourable impression. He was a man of fully fifty years of age, of medium height, robust and broad, but not fat; from his energy and vivacity of movement he looked anything but an old man, and showed every sign of great strength and sound health. His face was handsome and pleasant, and suited his bald head, and was framed in a full and perfectly silver beard. He wore spectacles, somewhat concealing thereby the one defect of his appearance, which none the less was a real "spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey". The fact is that one of his eyes was extremely disobedient, and from time to time used to turn in all directions, sometimes with startling and most disagreeable rapidity. As long as the disobedient eye remained still, you had before you a handsome, agreeable and kindly, but not particularly clever man, who won you by his appearance and inspired you with confidence. Then suddenly something

twitched, the eye got loose and began to stray suspiciously and knavishly, and confidence vanished in a moment.

It was evident that Olcott had already received detailed instructions from "Madame" on my account, and he accordingly from the first showed me the greatest friendliness and attention. He spoke French very tolerably, and when Helena Petrovna went away to write letters, he took me into his room, handed me one of the three chairs in it, sat down himself on another, and began to talk about "phenomena" and Mahatmas. He narrated to me how "Madame's" master, Mahatma Morya, had appeared to him—he, like Madame Blavatsky and the chelas, for some reason always avoided uttering this Mahatma's name when they spoke of him, and called him simply "the master," or by the initial M—but this appearance was not in the material body, but in the subtle "corps astral".

"Why are you certain that it was really he, and not your own subjective hallucination?" I asked.

"Because he left me an incontrovertible proof of his presence; before vanishing he took the turban from his head, and here it is."

At these words the colonel unrolled before me a silk handkerchief, took from it an Indian scarf of some fine material, and handed it to me.

I looked and fingered it; it was a scarf like another, quite material and not visionary.

Olcott reverently wrapped it up again in the handkerchief, and then showed me another marvel; a very strange and rather beautiful drawing, in water-colour and gold paint. On this I received the

explanation that "Madame" had laid her hand on a clean sheet of paper, had rubbed it a little, and suddenly the drawing appeared of itself.

When Madame Blavatsky had finished her correspondence, and we were talking together in the reception room, she asked me very eagerly if the colonel had shown me the scarf and the drawing.

"Yes, he did."

"And is it not interesting?"

"Not at all," I answered; "it would be best to advise Olcott not to show these objects here, especially to men. For himself, the scarf which he received from the hand of a being who was vanishing before his eyes, and the drawing at the 'abnormal' production of which he was present, have great importance. But for an indifferent person, whether he believes or does not believe in the possibility of such things, can they be called 'proofs'? I look at them, and for me they are no more than a scarf and a drawing. You will say that Olcott does not deserve to be suspected; but I reply that in matters of this sort no man, be he who he may, has any right to calculate on others' belief in him or to take offence at their disbelief; anything else will be extreme simplicity on his part and will do him the greatest damage."

Madame Blavatsky smiled.

"It is not every one who is as suspicious as you," she said; "however I thank you for your advice, and will take note of it. Yes, you are right, we are in Europe, at Paris, and not in India. People there do not meet an honourable and sincere man with the thought, 'So you are a cheat, then, and are

duping me'. Ah, you are suspicious, suspicious! Come now, tell me, if you yourself, with your own eyes, saw anything of the sort, would you believe then?"

"I should certainly trust my own eyes, if they were quite open."

"Wait; perhaps you will not have to wait long."

"I only hope so."

And with that we parted.

I was sitting busy with some urgent work, when a note from Madame Blavatsky came to tell me that two of her relations had arrived and wished to make my acquaintance as soon as possible, and begging me to come at once. As soon as I had finished my work I went. Helena Petrovna was in such a bright, happy mood that it was delightful, and at the same time sad, to see her. She was completely transfigured; there was no trace left of "Madame" or "H. P. B."; she was now an affectionate woman, worn out by long and far-off sufferings, by adventures of every sort, by work and troubles, who after many years had met her nearest relatives, and had plunged into the unforgotten and always loved atmosphere of her family and domestic reminiscences.

While we were alone together, she talked to me only about her dear guests, one of whom I shall call Miss X, the other Madame Y.[1] Helena Petrovna was particularly attached to the elder of the two ladies, Miss X, an old maid of nearly sixty, whom she had raised to the position of "honorary member

[1] [This letter is retained in the translation, though Madame Jelihovsky has herself announced that she is the Madame Y in question.]

of the Theosophical Society," and who was then "president of the N. N. branch".

"Here you have the very best proof, a living proof," said Helena Petrovna, "that there is not and cannot be anything whatever in the work of the Theosophical Society that can hurt the conscience of a Christian. X is a most fiery and severe Christian, prejudices and all, and she is our honorary member, and president at N. N."

"Then is there a Theosophical Society at N. N.?"

"Of course there is, just the same as here, only in embryo; but it is developing."

With Madame Y, a middle-aged widow, Helena Petrovna, as I concluded from her first words, and afterwards convinced myself, was on much less friendly terms; treating her rather patronisingly, *de haut en bas*. Madame Y was not honoured with an "honorary" diploma, but only with the diploma of an ordinary member of the Theosophical Society. Still Madame Blavatsky was greatly pleased at her arrival. The two ladies brought black bread, caviare, and so forth, and the poor "emissary of the Mahatmas" enjoyed it all just like a child.

Madame Y came in. Her frankness of manner immediately put us on an easy footing, and at the time I liked her. She was soon followed by Miss X, who at first seemed shy, but gradually began to talk, and at last got quite excited. It appeared that not long before she had lost a near relative who, according to her own words, was warmly attached to her. This death had struck her as a supreme injustice, it had shocked her and roused her indignation. Although Madame Blavatsky had recommended her

to me as a convinced Christian, still, under the shock of her relative's death, her faith had been staggered, and had not been able to whisper her relief or consolation.

I began to say to her all that one can say in such circumstances, and certainly there was nothing particular in my words. It was only what she might have heard from any one who was sincerely anxious to sympathise in her sorrow and to take a Christian view. What was my amazement when, after listening to me, she suddenly seized my hand and began to press it warmly.

"Thank you, thank you," she kept on repeating in a peculiar tone of voice; "no one has ever spoken to me like that. You have convinced me, now I understand it all. I am at peace. Thank you."

"Pardon me; but what I have said is only what any orthodox priest to whom you applied might have said to you."

But she stuck to her words, and from this moment all through the period of our personal relations, she showed me the greatest affection, and now and again overwhelmed me with extravagant compliments. Why I am obliged to mention this will be made clear in the sequel.

It is a matter of course that it was extremely interesting to me, out of more than mere curiosity, to make out the attitude of these two near relatives of Madame Blavatsky with respect to her work, the society, the Mahatmas and the phenomena. But in spite of our frequent meetings and our long conversations, I by no means succeeded in analysing this attitude at once. From their wonderful stories I

could only conclude that the life of their whole family simply teems with mysteries of all sorts. As for Helena Petrovna, various phenomena had occurred with her from her youth. While relating these phenomena Madame Y explained them by the fact that Madame Blavatsky was a very powerful medium.

If this was said in the presence of Madame Blavatsky herself, our "Madame" used to be terribly indignant and exasperated, her eyes rolled, she grew purple and declared that it was a falsehood, that all her phenomena from her youth up were not produced at all by the spiritist "shells," as she used to call the "spirits" of mediumism; but that they were the work of her "master" and other similar living sages of Thibet, who had long preordained her to be their emissary and had guided her life. On this subject there were almost serious disputes between the two honourable ladies.

I was particularly surprised with Miss X. She by no means served me as a visible proof that there was nothing in Madame Blavatsky's theosophy prejudicial to Christianity. At one of our first meetings she assured me that all these phenomena, Mahatmas, and so on, were all the manifestation of a power of darkness, the work of the devil's hands. She herself however had no fear whatever of this devil, but used actually to catch at his tail by always inciting Helena Petrovna in every way to produce "phenomena".

Some days after the arrival of these ladies occurred the "phenomenon of the letter". Helena Petrovna had persuaded me to submit myself to a magnetic

séance by Olcott, and I was to come for the purpose every two days before twelve o'clock. I came once, and found several persons in the little drawing-room. Madame Blavatsky was in a particularly excited state. Miss X had not yet left her room. The bell rang. I sat so that I could see Babula open the door, take a letter, come into the room, and lay it on the table.

Madame Blavatsky and Madame Y looked at the postmark and address of the letter, and said that it was for Miss X, and came from a common relation in O. The letter was not only completely gummed in a stout, opaque envelope, but the postage stamp was affixed in the place of the seal.

Helena Petrovna, quite unexpectedly to us all, proposed to read this letter in the sealed envelope.

"No, that is nonsense. It is impossible. You never will do that," exclaimed Madame Y.

"Madame" turned her eyes on her, put the letter against her forehead, and began to speak aloud with a visible effort, at the same time writing down her words upon a sheet of paper. When she had done, Madame Y again expressed her doubts as to the success of the experiment, and declared that certain details which Helena Petrovna had spoken and written down could hardly be in the letter.

Madame Blavatsky was evidently irritated by this, and with some sharpness declared that she would do better. With a red pencil she drew on her paper, at the end of the contents of the letter as she had written them, a theosophical sign; she then under-

lined one word, and with a tense expression on her face, and obviously with a great effort of will, she announced: "This sign must be at the end of the letter, and this word must be underlined in it".

The letter was then handed through the open door to Miss X. She came out to us at once, in the act of tearing open the envelope, took out the letter and read it. The contents of it turned out to be identical with what Helena Petrovna had written, though by no means word for word; and at the end we found Madame Blavatsky's sign exactly reproduced in red pencil, while the word which she had underlined occurred in the letter and was underlined in just the same way.

The ladies, astounded, immediately drew up a detailed account of this interesting phenomenon, and all those who were present signed it. I, of course, signed too.

Certainly I had no moral or legal right to tell them then that Babula *might* have brought in a letter already prepared an hour or two before, and fastened up again; or that Miss X very easily *might*, by turning back for a moment behind the door, have put a prepared letter into the envelope, and only have pretended to be in the act of opening the envelope before us. Moreover at the time no such possibilities even occurred to me. Such is the position to which a man may be brought, if he falls into the hands of "ladies who have passed seven years in Thibet".

When Madame Blavatsky asked me if I were satisfied, and if the phenomenon had surprised me, I

said that, though I could not but believe, I was still somehow dissatisfied.

"Wait a bit, you shall see better than that," she said with a smile.

I had not long to wait.

VI.

I RECEIVED a note from Madame de Barrau to say that there would be a meeting of theosophists and a lecture by Olcott at her house in the evening. I was anxious to see the colonel in the character of an orator.

When I arrived the company was already assembled. The colonel occupied the presidential seat at an oval table in the dining-room; on one side of him was Mohini, on the other Madame de Morsier, writing down all that was said. The meeting consisted of ten or twelve persons.

Madame Y, seeing me, pointed to a seat by her, and explained that Helena Petrovna was not well, and had therefore stayed at home with Miss X. "And so she sent me here out of politeness. It is pretty dull here, I can tell you. Olcott is talking something or other about Buddhism; we will sit here a little, and then we will go home and have some tea. Helena told me to bring you back without fail."

Olcott was in fact talking something or other about Buddhism, but he was interrupted every moment. Indeed it was not a lecture at all, but a mere conversation among people who did not agree with each other, and well understood that what was going on was not at all what they wanted.

Madame Y and I sat for about twenty minutes, and then slipped quietly out of the room. In the little drawing-room in Rue Notre Dame des Champs the lamp was lit, and Helena Petrovna was settled in her big arm-chair behind a round table, with a pack of little patience cards, and Miss X by her side. Both ladies scolded us for coming late, and Miss X said amiably to me: "Well, now we are here, and we will have a delightful evening. Helena was afraid you perhaps would not come, and was actually consulting the cards."

With these words Miss X went into her own room, and came back with some baskets of Russian sweets which she had brought with her.

Babula soon brought round the tea. There was silence all around us, there was hardly a passenger in the deserted street, and I again began to feel as though I were in some Russian country house, among some old-fashioned country ladies. And our conversation was entirely Russian, far, far from Paris, theosophy, India, and matters like these. But the illusion was not fated to continue. Though for the theosophists Madame Blavatsky had declared herself ill, it was obvious that she was feeling well, and was in the best of humours. She laid out her patience with her slender and singularly, almost excessively, pliant fingers, with their long nails, and sparkling with the diamonds, rubies, and emeralds of her rings. A happy and good-naturedly subtle smile hovered from time to time on her lips.

"Do tell me, Helena," suddenly said Miss X, turning to her, "did you bring with you the minia-

ture painted by that Hindu chela, that you wrote about to me?"

"No," replied Madame Blavatsky, "it was left at Adyar, so far as I remember. But anyhow we can find that out for certain at once. Babula!" she cried.

The Hindu's slovenly figure appeared at the door.

"Please tell me," said Madame Blavatsky, turning to him, "where is the little portrait of me that used to be in the locket?"

"It was left at Adyar in a drawer," declared the Hindu, rather too glibly, with a saucy look at his mistress.

"What a pity," exclaimed Miss X; "but why did you not bring it with you? it would have been interesting to see the artistic work of this chela of yours."

"You shall see his artistic work at once; I have on me just such another portrait of the 'master,' drawn by the same chela. Look!"

With these words Madame Blavatsky took from her neck a great golden locket, opened it, and gave it to Miss X.

The locket soon passed into my hands, and in it I found a very mediocre representation, painted on ivory, of an unusually handsome man in a white turban. We all looked, and looked again, and Helena Petrovna once more put the locket on her neck.

"Yes, but I should have liked to see your portrait in particular," said Miss X, sticking to her point. "You say there is nothing impossible, not only for your 'master,' but even for his chela. Now do get

them to bring this portrait here, before our eyes, from the drawer in Adyar."

"Oh, what a wish," remarked Madame Y.

Helena Petrovna smiled. "Well, we will see; perhaps it is possible," she said meaningly, and raised her hand. In an instant there was heard above our heads the sound of the silver bell with which I was already acquainted. Madame Blavatsky listened and then turned to Miss X.

"Now, take the medallion off me, and open it; perhaps you will find something."

Miss X took the locket, and opened it; and there appeared to my wondering eyes, on the two inner sides of it, two portraits: one, that which we already knew, of the handsome man in the white turban; the other, a portrait of Helena Petrovna in a sort of fur cap; not a good likeness, and not at all well painted, but unmistakably a portrait of her.

I took the locket in my hands, and examined it very carefully; both portraits were firmly set, so firmly indeed that they had all the appearance of having always been as they were, one opposite the other. It was all so neatly managed that I positively could not cavil at anything.

Miss X looked significantly at both of us in turn, and said at last: "Well, open the locket now; perhaps your portrait will have disappeared".

"Perhaps," said Helena Petrovna, and opened the locket; her portrait was not in it.

She again took the locket off her neck, and again put it into my hands; I examined it very attentively, and convinced myself that there was only a portrait of a man in a turban, firmly set, and not the

least trace of any other. Judging from the thickness of the locket there was no room behind the portrait of the "master" for a second portrait painted on an ivory plaque, and with a very fairly thick piece of glass attached to the front of it.

"A phenomenon, yes, a phenomenon," I thought; yet at the same time an internal instinct kept on repeating persistently: "May it not be that this is one of the commonest of conjuring tricks, that all has been prepared beforehand, the whole conversation about the portrait, down to the last word? May it not be that they invited me to tea, and arranged all this quiet and delightful scene, just in order to utterly astound me, and to secure me with this 'phenomenon' for ever and ever?"

This single thought was quite enough to dismiss from my mind the feeling of mingled pleasure and fear which cannot but come over a man on seeing half opened before him a door into the region of Nature's secrets.

"Well, and what do you say to that, Mr. Sceptic?" asked Helena Petrovna of me.

"It is unusual, and in every respect most interesting."

"Are you convinced at last?"

"Not quite; but now it will be very easy for you to convince me. I ask your master, for whom space does not exist, and who, you say, is invisibly present here, in this room, either he or his chela,—in a word, I ask the being or force by which these phenomena are produced, to put the portrait of you which has just disappeared, into my cigar-case."

I took my cigar-case out of my pocket, opened it,

ascertained that there was nothing but cigarettes in it, shut it again, and held it tightly in my hand.

"There," I said, "let your portrait find its way into this cigar-case, which I am holding in my hand, and then I shall be perfectly convinced, and be ready to undergo any tortures for my conviction."

Helena Petrovna bent her head as though she were listening to some one, and said: "You forget that you are dealing with a man who, though he can do things which seem extraordinary to you, still remains a Hindu fanatic. In his view he cannot in any way come into contact with a European."

I smiled, put my cigar-case back in my pocket, and changed the subject. Helena Petrovna was evidently irritated. In a few minutes I got up and said that it was already late, and that I ought to go home earlier. The ladies began to beg me to stay.

"Oh, please," said Madame Blavatsky, "only half an hour; our people will be back from the lecture in half an hour, and we will tell them of the phenomenon. Please now, do; don't be silly, do stay, what does half an hour matter?"

She took my hat from my hand and put it on the marble chimney-piece. I did not see anything in particular, but an inner voice said to me: "The portrait is in the hat". I should much have liked to go straight to the chimney-piece, and ascertain at once if I was right or not, but I was patient enough to return to my place and observe.

The ladies were greatly excited: Madame Y declared that she saw a sort of grey shadow of a man.

"I see a shadow, too," said I laughingly; "see,

it is condensing near the fireplace, close to my hat."

I expected that after these words of mine Madame Blavatsky would go to the fireplace, and that I should not find the portrait in my hat. She did, in fact, begin to get up, but sank back into her arm-chair.

Presently the bell rang; the theosophists had come back from the lecture. The ladies began to give Olcott, Mohini and Keightley a lively account of the phenomenon which had just come to pass; they requested me to confirm them, and I, of course, did confirm them, saying that everything had happened just as they said.

"May I go now?" I asked Helena Petrovna.

"You may."

I went to the fireplace, and took my hat; and, sure enough, a little oval portrait was inside, the same which I had been shown in Madame Blavatsky's locket, and which had afterwards disappeared. I could not help laughing.

"The Hindu fanatic has got over his repulsion for a European," I said; "Helena Petrovna, take back your portrait."

"It is no longer mine," she replied; "keep it yourself as a memento, if you like; if not, throw it away."

"I am much obliged to you; I will keep it as a memento."

Next morning I had to return to Madame Blavatsky's lodgings, to submit myself to the colonel's usual magnetic passes. I was curious to have a look at Helena Petrovna in the light of day, after the phenomenon of the day before.

I found all three ladies somewhat disturbed, but none the less they immediately began, of course, to talk about the phenomenon.

"Is it not convincing?" asked Madame Blavatsky.

"It is not convincing," I said.

"But what is it you really want? Do you imagine that it was a conjuring trick of mine?"

"I imagine nothing whatever, simply I am not convinced; and so little is wanted to convince me. Even now it would be so easy to put everything right. You said yourself that the author of the phenomenon could not put the portrait in the cigar-case because I was holding the cigar-case in my hand?"

"Yes."

"But still he can put it in the hat I wear?"

"That is quite another matter."

"Well, then, I make the following proposition. Your portrait is now in my bureau; when I go home to-day I will take it into the garden and bury it in the ground. If the Hindu sage can come into contact with my hat, it will certainly be quite easy for him to dig up the portrait out of my garden and take it away. I will wait two weeks; if at the end of two weeks I dig up the spot and do not find the portrait, the phenomenon will be as convincing to me as if the portrait had been put into my cigar-case."

"Very well, I will try," said Helena Petrovna in a crest-fallen voice.

But the dejection was only momentary; she got angry directly and was then in no mood to restrain

herself; all her wisdom vanished, and she showed every symptom of an exasperated woman, who had failed in attaining what she wanted and at the same time had got herself into a mess.

"So, then, you cannot send an account of this phenomenon to any of the Russian papers?" she asked.

"At the moment I certainly cannot," I replied, "but as soon as ever I am convinced that the portrait has vanished from my garden, I will write; and I will not only write, I will proclaim the phenomenon at the top of my voice."

"Oh, very well then," exclaimed Helena Petrovna, all livid; "write and say that I am a conjurer and a cheat. Say that you are convinced of it. Describe me from every point of view, with all the honours; pray do be so obliging."

Happily Olcott came into the room, and asked me to go with him for a magnetic *séance;* or I do not know how my explanation with Helena Petrovna would have ended. But none the less after the *séance* Miss X and Madame Y, evidently at Madame Blavatsky's suggestion, did all they could to persuade me to send to Russia a communication about the phenomenon. I steadily refused, and they held their peace.

When I got home, in order to clear my conscience, I dug a hole in my garden and buried the portrait in it. In two weeks I dug up again the spot, which I had noted, and, of course, found the portrait quite intact. I may further say that during the interval Helena Petrovna had been in my garden, and I had purposely taken her to the spot where the portrait

was buried, but even her presence did not enable her invisible companion to solve a problem, the successful solution of which would probably have converted me into a fanatical preacher of the phenomena wrought by the "emissary of the Mahatmas".

VII.

It was at this time my lot to see more of Madame Y than even of Madame Blavatsky. We used to stroll about Paris together; we attended the meeting of the Senate where the eloquent Naquet in fiery speeches defended the bill for freedom of divorce, at the moment the most lively novelty of the day. At this sitting, in the midst of the throng of senators of the French Republic, the "ancient of days," Victor Hugo, slumbered in the most unceremonious fashion, waking only at the orator's loudest outbursts, and staring straight in front with an indifferent and expressionless gaze. This almost mindless stare of the poet who had already long outlived himself told eloquently that he had no concern in freedom of divorce, or indeed in any other matters of this life; that over his grey head, marked with the seal of God, the pale angel of death was already beating his wing. In less than a year this same pale angel had taken him and set him free from his too long earthly life; whereat Paris, ever eager for spectacles, was favoured with a spectacle of unheard-of solemnity and originality, of which it was my fortune to be a witness.

After a long walk which had tired us out, Madame Y and I found ourselves in the charming little Parc

Monceau, where we sat for about an hour, resting on a comfortable garden seat beneath the thick branches of the old chestnuts which sheltered us from the burning rays of the sun. We carried on a lively and unreserved conversation on very various subjects, and Madame Y showed me so much sympathy that I was deeply touched. At last she said: "But to show you that my feeling for you is more than empty words, I will speak to you on some matters about which I certainly would not open my mouth to any one who was indifferent to me. I have been thinking a great deal about you lately; I fancy you are being too much carried away by the Theosophical Society, and I am afraid that this influence may act upon you injuriously and sadly in every way."

"I heartily thank you for your sympathy," I said, "but I do not think I am a man who is so easily carried away as you fancy. No doubt I am greatly interested in the Theosophical Society—it cannot be otherwise—you see, I have already told you that mystical and occult matters of every sort form at present the object of my studies. How can there be anything prejudicial to me in them? Or are you afraid of my turning Buddhist, under the influence of Olcott and Mohini? You may make yourself perfectly easy on that point."

"Ah no! It is not that at all," exclaimed Madame Y; "the danger is not in the reading of books on mysticism, and in the study of occultism. You may be carried away by other means than those, and get yourself into a very risky position. There are some things which catch and pervert the eyesight, and when one sees one's error and recovers

one's sight, it is too late. You will not repeat to Helena what I say?"

"If you think I shall repeat it, please do not say another word."

"Well then, listen to me. What are you going to say about the phenomenon of the locket?"

"You can answer that question yourself; you must have seen what I thought of it."

"And have you made out what I thought of it, and indeed of all Helena's performances?"

"To speak frankly, up to the present I have not made it out."

"That is where it is! You must know that she and I have nothing whatever in common. I love her, I have been accustomed to love her from childhood; there are moments when I am very sorry for her; whatever you may say, she is certainly a grievously unhappy woman. Now I must tell you that out of pity for her I often have to shut my eyes, though she shocks me terribly. But I love her, I am sorry for her, I cannot but be indulgent to her. Just now we had not met for many years; she wrote and begged me to come and see her, and as I had not the means for such a journey, she sent me the money required, and so I came. I am very glad to see her and to be with her, but still there is nothing but difference between us, we have nothing in common. She is continually coercing me to write about her society and all these phenomena, but what have I to do with all that? Whatever is possible I am ready to do for her; but what she asks is impossible; I would sacrifice a great deal for her sake, but I am not prepared to sacrifice my conscience."

"Your conscience? Does she ask anything of that sort of you?"

"Yes, that is just what she does ask; she has been asking it of me for a long time now, for many years. To her what she wants seems only a trifle, you see; but for me, if I fell in with her wishes, it would be a crime—I say a crime. She cannot understand me, we look at things quite differently; I am a Christian, but she—what is she? I, like you, do not know; perhaps she herself does not really know. She sticks so close to me that I cannot get away from her. 'So it seems,' she says, 'that you do not love me, if you will not even do this for me. What will it cost you? Don't you see that this is simply childish simplicity?' And fancy, X helps her to worry me. 'So,' she says, 'no one but me loves Helena; you don't love her, for you will not help her.' Just think what it is! X really has no bounds for her pity for Helena, but is that real love? Can it be that one should take to falsehood and crime to prove one's love? That sort of love in the long run will only mean ruin for both of them, and nothing else. There is * * *" (she named a relation of theirs who had recently died, a fairly well-known man), "he was a man of great intellect, and a real genuine Christian; as he was dying, on his deathbed, he begged me not to yield to Helena's prayers, and to explain to her that if she had her way, if I agreed to do what she was continually begging me to do, it would be her own ruin in the first place."

"But what is it all about?" I said; "you are only talking in riddles."

"I cannot talk in any other way."

"But from your riddles I cannot but conclude the very worst. You talk of 'crime' and 'ruin'."

"Yes, that is so. You understand well enough what I am talking about; that is not hard. Do not press me to explain myself any further; I have said quite enough to put you on your guard. Beware! You may get entangled. Helena is such a woman! Sometimes she acts with extreme simplicity, with absolute folly; but at the same time she knows how to raise such a smoke. If you only knew the people she has entangled in her meshes!"

"But you have said so much that you had better go through with it."

"No, I shall say no more!" exclaimed Madame Y. "I have said too much; and in what I have said there are very few *i*'s I have not already dotted, and those you can dot yourself. *A bon entendeur, salut.*"

"That is to say, all these phenomena of the Mahatmas, all these doings, are nothing but deceit, deceit, and again deceit!" I exclaimed.

"I say nothing," solemnly replied Madame Y; and in fact she would not utter another word.

A few months later she wrote to me from Russia, reminding me of this conversation, and repeating in writing all that I have here set down. This letter is still in my possession.

As I am compelled by Madame Jelihovsky, who knows better than any one who it is that I call Y, to speak about the Theosophical Society and its foundress, I cannot ignore so important a fact; I cannot and must not. In the chain of evidence about the impostures of theosophy, the admissions

of Madame Y, verbal and written, form a most important link.

I was deeply grateful to Madame Y for these admissions, which, in fact, produced a most powerful impression on me, and led me to devote myself to what was going on before my eyes with yet more rigour and coolness. They could not however weaken my interest in the Theosophical Society and in Madame Blavatsky herself—I was myself already on the alert and had already told myself that not all of Helena Petrovna's phenomena were genuine.

I was very much inclined to adopt Madame Y's opinion that Madame Blavatsky was a medium, and that the majority of her phenomena were of medianic origin. I had already had occasion to observe many mediums at close quarters, and I knew perfectly from what I had seen that every one of them was certain to produce fraudulent phenomena at times, but that this did by no means prove all the phenomena they produced to be fraudulent. If anything "abnormal" occurred of itself, well and good; if nothing happened, then some irresistible force drove the medium to "help" the manifestation and to trick. I had long ago convinced myself that this was a universal law with mediums—not only with professional mediums, but with all. The marvellous is an abyss with an irresistible power of attraction, and all the flowers that grow about it, whether poisonous or harmless, alike possess an intoxicating aroma.

I had already clearly perceived, without Madame Y's help, that I should not find in Madame Blavatsky and her society that for which I had in the first

instance come to her; yet I had as yet no reason for avoiding her; on the contrary, there were two very important reasons why I should not only not avoid her, but should, so far as possible, keep in touch with her and her society. So far as concerned this new theosophy and its literature, I had as yet learnt nothing; in other words, I was bound to acquaint myself well with this literature and doctrine, and to make out clearly what there was in it that was new, and what was drawn from sources already known to me.

For instance, I, like the rest of the Paris theosophists, was much occupied with the question of Karma and Nirvana, as set out by Olcott, Mohini and Madame Blavatsky. And this was not the only thing. There was a great deal that was interesting.

As for Madame Blavatsky herself, after the conversation with Madame Y, I definitely promised myself that come what might I would see through this woman.

Though there was as yet no real theosophical movement in Europe, still it might take a start tomorrow, if not to-day—as indeed happened. At the moment there were but few about Madame Blavatsky; in a year or two there might be thousands coming to her, as they had already come in America and India. What sort of woman was she, this foundress of a religion which, if not new, was at any rate renovated, and was propagated by her phenomena? which of these phenomena were true and which were false, or was there any truth in them at all?

Me she could fortunately not in any case lead

astray; but even in the then narrow circle of the Parisian theosophists I saw some who were being really fascinated, who were on the point of flinging themselves head foremost into the abyss into which Helena Petrovna was inviting them to look, with the lifting of her hand, with the sound of her invisible silver bells, and with the production of her phenomena. And then, if all these phenomena, absolutely all, were one great fraud, what sort of woman could this Helena Petrovna be? In such a case she must be a terrible and perilous thief of souls.

And evidently she wished by every means to spread her toils as wide as possible, she dreamt of setting them even in Russia. This is why she asked Madame Y, and had long been asking her, for several years, to help her, and commit a crime. And this is why she had made such a set at me; no doubt, in a matter like this, she had need of a man who writes a great deal, and whom people read.

Moreover there remained one more thought, or rather one more feeling; I, like Madame Y, pitied Helena Petrovna, this talented woman in whom, in spite of all, I had marked and divined a soul not yet wholly lost. How could one tell? Perhaps it was still possible, by one means or another, to stop her and save her, as much for her own sake as for those whom she might ruin with her falsehood and fraud. And besides all this, might she not be herself the most interesting phenomenon of all, with her intellect and talents, with her funny simplicity and naïveté, with her lies and her sincerity? It was

tempting to see through and read such a phenomenon, such a living "human document". It was only needful to know that one's head would not swim, and that the poisoned flower of the abyss would not intoxicate; but here I had as yet no reason to fear for myself.

VIII.

My attitude towards the phenomenon of the locket, on which Madame Blavatsky had founded great hopes, evidently produced no small effect; Helena Petrovna declared that there would be no more phenomena, and that she felt too weak to afford the considerable expenditure of vital force required for these manifestations. From time to time she treated us, though even this very rarely, to the sounds of her silver bell. Sometimes these sounds reached us as though from a distance; they issued from the end of the passage where her room was. This would have been interesting enough, if I had not known that Babula was in the passage, that he always had access to his mistress's room, and that he was a most consummate rascal; a glance at his face was enough to convince one of this. Moreover Miss X and Madame Y said to me one day: "That Babula is most amusing. When Helena is busy and we have nothing to do, we have him in and ask him about all sorts of things. He has a droll way of telling about all that goes on at Adyar."

"Yes, and when I ask him," continued Madame Y, "if he has seen the Mahatmas, he laughs and says: 'I have often seen them'. 'What are they like?' I ask, and he answers: 'They are fine!' he says, 'Muslin!' and then he laughs again."

"Dreadful rascal," remarked Miss X; "she asked him what they were like, and he said directly, 'Muslin,' and roared with laughter."

This conversation seemed to have a certain interest of its own, and I noted it down at the time; and when talking to Helena Petrovna I advised her, with a laugh, to send Babula off at once. "Mark my words," I said, "you will have some scandal with him yet; he is not at all trustworthy." She said nothing in reply, and I do not even know if she grasped the sense of my words.

What sort of scandal about Babula happened in the course of the next two months in London I do not know; but he was sent off to India in a hurry, and no more was heard of him thereafter.[1]

When the sound of the bell was heard at the end of the passage, Madame Blavatsky jumped up, saying, "The master is calling," and went off to her room.

She showed us also, more than once, another small phenomenon. At some quite considerable distance from a table or mirror she would shake her

[1] I was not wrong in putting down Babula as a rascal at first sight. From the Report of the London Society for Psychical Research which was published about a year afterwards, I learnt that before meeting Madame Blavatsky he had been in the service of a French conjurer, and that he was skilled in various phenomena, particularly in "phenomena with letters and postmen". This report also clearly shows the meaning of the expression that the Mahatmas were "muslin". At the time I could not conceive what it meant, but it seems that the rascal, finding out, on what grounds I do not know, that with Madame Blavatsky's immediate relations there was no need of concealment, had told them the simple truth.

hand, as though she were sprinkling some liquid off it; and thereupon there would be heard from the surface of the table or mirror sharp and perfectly distinct raps. In reply to my question what this was, she could give me no sort of explanation whatever, except that she wished the raps to come, and they came. "Try to exert your will," she said, "and perhaps you will get them too."

I exerted my will with all my force, but nothing happened with me. And yet, when she laid her hands on my shoulder, and I shook my hand, precisely the same raps came on the table and the mirror as with her.

Twice in my presence there occurred another similar manifestation; more or less loud raps began to be heard all about her, such as are familiar to any one who has been at a spiritual *séance*. "Listen. The 'shells' are amusing themselves," she said. The raps increased and began to spread. "Hush, you rascals," she cried, and all was instantly still.

Helena Petrovna had apparently made up her mind that "at present" there was nothing to be done in Paris, and that the time was not yet come for her to set *tout Paris* talking about her. Her London friends promised her greater successes and triumphs in the capital of foggy Albion, and she began to talk louder every day about the necessity for an immediate journey to London.

"I will just enjoy myself a little longer with you," she said to her two kinswomen and to me, "and then we will say good-bye, and I will jog on to London; it is high time, they are looking for me. Sinnett is wild with impatience. Everything is duly arranged,

and the 'psychists' have long been wanting to examine me in person. They are already tremendously interested in me. Very well, let them have their wish." By "psychists" she meant the members of the London Society for Psychical Research.

IX.

MADAME BLAVATSKY left for London, swearing me eternal friendship and giving me in charge to Madame de Morsier, who was to see that my interest in the Theosophical Society "should not wither, if it could not flourish". All the second half of the summer I passed in hard work; I had set about a big novel, and was eagerly digging into the treasures of mystic literature, ancient and modern, which I found in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in the old book-shops of the Quartier Latin, and in the stalls on the bank of the Seine. I was flooded with such rarities, curiosities, and unexpected finds, that I quite forgot all about my overwrought nerves, and did exactly the contrary of what the doctors ordered me, when they prescribed a long journey abroad, in order to get a complete change of life and surroundings.

Meanwhile I did not find in the writings and expositions of the preachers of the Theosophical Society much that was particularly original; but still they served as a complement to my studies. I patiently read through the two bulky volumes of Madame Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled*, and this in a manuscript French translation, which Helena Petrovna had left with me, that I might consider if it would be possible to publish it with very considerable abbreviations.

On reading the first part of this work, while Madame Blavatsky was still in Paris, I happened to say to Madame Y: "It seems to me that *Isis Unveiled* is the most interesting of Helena Petrovna's phenomena, and, perhaps, the most inexplicable". Now that I am perfectly acquainted with the explanation of these phenomena, I hold this opinion all the more firmly. "Madame" had spent no little labour on her book. She had read and remembered no small amount. She could no doubt dispense with the "unique" MSS. of the Vatican; but she must undoubtedly have mastered a whole special library.

Her *Isis* is a huge sack, in which the most heterogeneous things are piled up without system or selection. It unquestionably contains interesting and important matter, drawn alike from ancient and from comparatively modern authors; it contains too some acute remarks and inferences of Madame Blavatsky's own, but together with this there is any amount of nonsense of all sorts, absolutely good for nothing. In order to arrive at this conclusion with respect to *Isis*, it is not in the least necessary to spend three years in the study of mystic and occult literature, and daily to swallow this spiced draught in allopathic doses; it is quite enough merely to read through Eliphas Levi, Saint Ives, Franck, Vincent, Görres, etc., and to be sufficiently posted up in the most recent investigations on hypnotism and kindred subjects.

Whether or no the sages of Thibet took a share in "Madame's" literary work, they were at least unable at other times to explain to her the simplest matters. As a trifling instance, here is a letter from Elberfeld in the early autumn of 1884:—

"Vsevolod Sergyeïtch, dear friend, for God's sake give me a Russian translation of the phrase *génération spontanée*. Devil take the scientific men who invent words that you can't find in the dictionaries. I beseech you, invent a translation at once, and let me have it without delay; I want it for my article for Katkoff, which is at last coming to an end. Good-bye, dear friend.—Yours, H. BLAVATSKY."

How much more simple it would have been for her to raise her hand, to ring her silver bell, and summon from Thibet the omniscient Mahatma or his chela, and ask! But of "Madame's" writings we shall speak later.

From time to time I corresponded with Madame Blavatsky, and while expressing in my letters an involuntary liking and sympathy for herself personally, I none the less held steadily to my aim, and said to myself: "I will not stop till I *know* what she and her phenomena really are". Of course I did not expect that she would at once, especially in her letters, speak out and betray herself; but I already knew enough of her to reckon on her constant "little" slips, which when fitted together would form something great and palpable.

As she was in the highest degree impulsive and indiscreet, and at some moments artless in the extreme, Madame Blavatsky could thoroughly baffle only those who were yet more artless and more inconsiderate than herself. Her chief strength, and the secret of her successes, lay in her extraordinary cynicism and contempt for mankind; a cynicism which she used to conceal as a rule with great skill, but which still broke out irresistibly at times. "The

simpler, the sillier and the coarser the phenomenon," she subsequently admitted to me, "the more likely it is to succeed. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others, are hopeless fools. If you only knew what lions and eagles in every part of the world have turned into asses at my whistle, and have obediently wagged their long ears in time as I piped the tune!"

But the time for these confessions was still far distant. "Madame" continued to mystify me with her "master," and to assure me that I stood under his special protection. As for phenomena, she wrote under the depression of her failures in Paris: "I can do nothing in the way of phenomena, and I am so sick of them. Do not talk about them."

She still upbraided me for my suspiciousness. I told her of the *séances* of the magnetiser Robert and his clairvoyant subject Edouard, who, beyond a doubt, like his teacher used conjuring and simulation. But she wrote in reply: "Dear Mr. Vsevolod Sergyeïtch, you are the most dreadful and incorrigible—not sceptic, but 'suspecter'. Why, what has this Edouard done to you, that you should imagine he simulates? But after all, what does it matter to me? Suspect *all* if you think good. It is the worse for you." The underlined *all* was clear enough. And here is something yet clearer: "It is horrible to pass one's life in suspecting all and everybody. I am perfectly certain that you do not intend to express your suspicions of me before people. I at all events have never been a suspecter; and those whom I love I love in earnest; but of them there are very few."

I maintain, and it will be evident in the long run from the sequel of my narrative and from her own letters, that when she had found a man whom she wished to win over and turn into an obedient tool, she worked on him by cordiality and sincerity. She tried to convince him of her devotion, her warm affection and friendship; and then by virtue of these feelings, she got him to do this or that for her. Everything was founded on personal relations and on feelings. With women these tactics worked wonders.

From London Madame Blavatsky went at the end of the summer [1884] to Elberfeld in Germany and wrote to me thence: "Here I am, dead beat, but in the company of Olcott, Mohini, and some German theosophists. This is a charming little town and a charming family of theosophists; Mr. and Mrs. Gebhard, his three sons and a daughter-in-law, and nephews and nieces, nine in all. It is a huge, splendid house. She is a disciple of Eliphas Levi, and is mad about occultism. Come here for a few days."

At this time my excessive overwork had begun to make itself felt. I had suddenly become conscious of great fatigue and weakness. I had to go to the doctor again, and he of course ordered a temporary cessation of all work, complete rest, and distraction. The distractions of Paris had no existence for me, and I decided to get change of air and distraction by a visit to Madame Blavatsky at Elberfeld. If I had considered that an excursion into the region of so-called marvels could but yet further upset my nerves, if I had had the whisper of a presentiment of the

unexpected trial to which I was about to submit myself, I should not have gone, in spite of all my desire to see "Madame" and to try a fall with her.

On a hot August day, the 24th, new style, I left Paris. As I felt very unwell, I decided to rest half way, at Brussels. Besides I had at that time never been in Belgium, and had not seen Brussels. I stopped at the Grand Hotel, slept very badly, went out in the morning to see the town, and on the staircase fell in with Miss A. To my surprise she met me most affably. We were both bored, and simply delighted to see one another. I found that she was in Brussels on some business of her own, and that she was going on to Cologne, and then somewhere else.

"And why are you here?"

"I am going to Elberfeld to see Madame Blavatsky; she is ill and has sent for me."

"Very well, then I will go with you."

"Excellent. When shall we start?"

"At nine o'clock to-morrow morning, that is the most convenient train, or else we shall have to arrive at Elberfeld late in the evening, not before ten."

This point settled, we passed the rest of the day together, and in the evening Miss A told me so much that was startling, marvellous, and mysterious that I went off to my room with my head positively in a whirl, and though it was very late, I could not get to sleep. I knew very well that in spite of all the efforts of the orthodox science of *yesterday* to deny the *supersensual*, it still exists, and from time to time manifests itself in human life; but I equally knew that these manifestations are rare, and cannot be otherwise.

Yet here was the supersensual, in the most varied, and sometimes in the most grotesque forms, literally inundating the life of a healthy, vigorous, energetic person, one who was moreover absorbed in material affairs and business! The whole night through I hardly slept; at seven o'clock I dressed and ordered tea. At about eight I received a note from Miss A saying that she had not slept either; a sort of invisible struggle had been going on about her, her head was aching, and she could not possibly start, as *all* her keys were lost. I went to her, and found her standing in the midst of her portmanteaux and travelling bags. She assured me that "all the keys were lost, every one; yet last night they were all there, under her eyes".

"Send for a locksmith."

"I have sent."

The locksmith appeared and opened a portmanteau: in the portmanteau was a bunch of keys, and on the bunch the key of the portmanteau itself!

"There you see the sort of thing that happens to me," exclaimed Miss A triumphantly.

"I do indeed," I replied.

As we had by this time missed the nine o'clock train, we agreed to take a walk in the city, and to start at one o'clock. But I suddenly began to feel an unusual weakness, and a desire to sleep came over me. I begged Miss A to excuse me, went to my own room, and threw myself on the bed. However I did not fall asleep, but lay with my eyes closed,—and there before me, one after the other, passed, quite clear and distinct, various landscapes which I did not know. This was so new to me, and

so beautiful, that I lay without stirring, for fear of interrupting and spoiling the vision. At last all became misty, little by little, then grew confused, and I saw no more.

I opened my eyes. Drowsiness and weakness had passed away. I went back to Miss A, and could not refrain from telling her what had happened to me. I described in detail, with all the circumstances, the landscapes which I had seen.

We took our seats in a *coupé* of the train, which carried us off, and we were talking together, when suddenly Miss A looked out of the window, and exclaimed: "See, here is one of your landscapes!"

The effect was almost painful. There could be no doubt about it, just as I could not doubt that this was the first time I had ever travelled by this line or been in this region. Until it grew dark, I continued to gaze in reality upon all that I had seen in the morning, as I lay on the bed with my eyes closed.

We reached Elberfeld, and went to the Hotel Victoria; and finding that it was not very late, we set off to see Madame Blavatsky, in the house of the merchant Gebhard, about the best house in Elberfeld.

X.

We found our poor "Madame" all swollen with dropsy, and almost without movement, in an enormous arm-chair, surrounded by Olcott, Mohini, and Keightley, by two Englishwomen from London, Mrs. and Miss Arundale, by Mrs. Holloway, an American, and Gebhard with his wife and son. The rest of the Gebhards, as well as the "nephews and nieces" of whom Madame Blavatsky had written to me, had left Elberfeld.

"Madame" was extremely delighted to see us; she brightened up, and began to fidget in her arm-chair, and to "let off steam" in Russian, to the annoyance of those around her, as I clearly saw.

We were in a large and handsome drawing-room. It was divided into two portions by an arch, over which heavy draperies were drawn, and what there was behind them, in the other half of the room, I did not know. When we had talked long enough, Helena Petrovna called up Rudolf Gebhard, a young man with very good manners, and whispered something to him, on which he disappeared.

"I am going to give you a surprise directly," she said.

I soon saw that the surprise had something to do with the half of the room hidden behind the draperies, as a certain bustle was to be heard from there.

The curtains were suddenly drawn back, and two wonderful figures, illuminated with a brilliant, bluish light, concentrated and strengthened by mirrors, rose before us. At the first moment I thought I was looking on living men, so skilfully was the whole thing conceived. But it turned out that they were two great draped portraits of Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi, painted in oils by Schmiechen, an artist related to the Gebhards.

Subsequently, when I had thoroughly examined these portraits, I found in them much that was unsatisfactory from an artistic point of view; but their life-likeness was remarkable, and the eyes of the two mysterious strangers gazed straight at the spectator, their lips could almost have been said to move.

The artist, of course, had never seen the originals of these two portraits. Madame Blavatsky and Olcott assured us all that he had painted by inspiration, that "they" had themselves guided his pencil, and that "the likeness was extraordinary". However that might be, Schmiechen had painted two beautiful young men. Mahatma Koot Hoomi, clad in a graceful sort of robe, trimmed with fur, had a tender, almost feminine face, and gazed sweetly with a pair of charming light eyes.

But as soon as one looked at "the master," Koot Hoomi, for all his tender beauty, was at once forgotten. The fiery black eyes of the tall Morya fixed themselves sternly and piercingly upon one, and it was impossible to tear oneself away from them. The "master" was represented as in the miniature in Madame Blavatsky's locket, crowned with a white

turban and in a white garment. All the power of the reflectors was turned upon this sombrely beautiful face, and the whiteness of the turban and dress completed the brilliance and life-likeness of the effect.

Madame Blavatsky asked for still more light upon her "master," so Rudolf Gebhard and Keightley altered the mirrors, arranged the drapery round the portrait, and placed Koot Hoomi aside. The effect was surprising. One had to force oneself to remember that it was not a living man. I could not turn my eyes away.

Olcott and Madame Blavatsky kept me more than an hour before this portrait. At last my head began to ache with the excessively bright light, and I felt all the symptoms of severe fatigue; the journey and the two almost sleepless nights had begun to tell upon me. I told Miss A that I was not capable of staying any longer, and that it was high time for us to return to our Hotel Victoria and go to bed at once. She also complained of extreme fatigue. Madame Blavatsky bade us good-bye, after making us promise that we would come back as early as possible in the morning.

On the way to the hotel we could talk of nothing but the wonderful portrait of the "master," and in the darkness he seemed to stand before me. I tried to shut my eyes, but I still saw him clearly in every detail. When I reached my room, I locked the door, undressed, and went to sleep.

Suddenly I woke up, or, what is more probable, I dreamt, I imagined, that I was awoke by a warm breath. I found myself in the same room, and before

me, in the half-darkness, there stood a tall human figure in white. I *felt* a voice, without knowing how or in what language, bidding me light the candle. I was not in the least alarmed, and was not surprised. I lighted the candle, and it appeared to me that it was two o'clock, by my watch. The vision did not vanish. There was a living man before me, and this man was clearly none other than the original of the wonderful portrait, an *exact repetition* of it. He placed himself on a chair beside me, and told me in "an unknown but intelligible language" various matters of interest to myself. Among other things he told me that in order to see him in his astral body I had had to go through much preparation, and that the last lesson had been given me that morning, when I saw with closed eyes the landscapes through which I was to pass on the way to Elberfeld; and that I possessed a great and growing magnetic force. I asked how I was to employ it; but he vanished in silence. I thought that I sprang after him; but the door was closed. The idea came upon me that it was an hallucination, and that I was going out of my mind. But there was Mahatma Morya back again in his place, without movement, with his gaze fixed upon me, the same, exactly the same, as he was imprinted on my brain. He began to shake his head, smiled, and said, still in the voiceless, imaginary language of dreams: "Be assured that I am not an hallucination and that your reason is not deserting you. Madame Blavatsky will show you to-morrow in the presence of all that my visit was real." He vanished; I looked at my watch, and saw that it was about three o'clock; I put out the candle, and went to sleep at once.

I woke at ten o'clock and remembered everything quite clearly. The door was locked; it was impossible to tell from the candle if it had been lighted during the night, and if it had been long burning, as I had lighted it on my first arrival before the visit to Madame Blavatsky.

In the coffee-room of the hotel I found Miss A at breakfast.

"Have you had a good night?" I asked her.

"Not very, I have seen the Mahatma Morya."

"Really? And I have seen him too."

"How did you see him?"

I had committed myself, and it was too late to withdraw. I described to her my vivid dream, or hallucination, and learnt from her that while she was thinking whether she should formally turn theosophist, or if there was not something "dark" in it, Mahatma Morya had appeared to her and said: "We have great need of a 'little beetle' like you".

"That is exactly what he said, a 'little beetle,' and he said it in Russian," Miss A assured me, extremely delighted, for some reason or other, that the Mahatma had called her a "little beetle". She then went on: "So let us go to Madame Blavatsky. What will she say? If it was Morya, and not our own fancy, she must know."

We set off to the Gebhard's. Madame Blavatsky met us, as I thought, with an enigmatical smile, and asked: "Well, what sort of a night have you had?"

"Very good," I replied, and thoughtlessly added: "Have you nothing to tell me?"

"Nothing particular," she said; "I only know

that the 'master' has been to see you with one of his chelas."

In these words there was no evidential value whatever. She had more than once, both by word of mouth and by letter, assured me that the master visited me. But Miss A considered her words wonderful, and began to narrate our visions. Madame Blavatsky could not conceal the delight which came upon her. She forgot all her sufferings, and her eyes flashed sparks.

"There, there, you are done for, Mr. Sceptic and Suspecter!" she kept on repeating. "What will you say now?"

"I shall say that I had a very clear, vivid dream, or hallucination, produced by my nervous state, my great fatigue in consequence of the journey, after two sleepless nights, and the powerful impression which had been produced on me by the brilliantly lighted portrait on which I gazed for more than an hour. If it had been in the day-time, or in the evening before I went to sleep, or if, on the other hand, I had not gone to sleep again when the Mahatma disappeared, I should have been inclined to believe in the reality of what happened to me. But you see this came 'between two sleeps,' and he did not talk to me with a voice, or in words, or in any language that I know; and finally, he did not leave me any material proof of his visit, or take the turban off his head, as he did with Olcott. These are three important considerations which point to its having been only a dream or a subjective delusion."

"Well now, really, God knows what this means!"

—Helena Petrovna grew warm. "You will drive me out of my mind with your incredulity. But you say he told you some very interesting things?"

"Yes, he told me just what I was busy with, and what was to be found in my brain."

"But he himself assured you that he was not an hallucination?"

"Yes, but he said that you would prove this to me in the presence of all."

"And have I not proved it by knowing about his visit?"

"I do not consider this a valid proof."

"Very well, I will prove it in another way. Meanwhile, you surely do not mean to deny that you have seen him and talked to him?"

"How can I possibly deny what Miss A has heard from my own mouth, and you have heard from hers? I ought not to have committed myself, but now you know yourself it is too late; as they say, a word is not a sparrow; once off, there is no enticing it back again."

Madame Blavatsky rang an electric bell, collected all her theosophists, and began, with the irritating loudness which was natural to her, to tell about the great phenomenon which had taken place.

It is easy to imagine my position, when all these ladies and gentlemen began to congratulate me on the high honour, happiness, and glory which I had won, in the visit which I had received from Mahatma Morya. I declared that I was much inclined to regard the manifestation as a dream or delusion, produced by the state of my nerves and by fatigue. At this they began to regard me with horror as a blasphemer.

The whole day passed in nothing but talk about the "great phenomenon".

In the evening we were all assembled in the pretty "Oriental" room, all, that is, but Olcott, who was on the second floor. Suddenly Madame Blavatsky, who had been brought to us in her arm-chair, announced: "The master was upstairs just now; he passed by Olcott's side and put something in his pocket. Keightley, run upstairs and bring the colonel."

The colonel appeared.

"Have you just seen the master?" asked "Madame"

The "old cat's"[1] eye got loose, and began to stray.

"I felt his presence and his touch," he replied.

"On which side?"

"On the right."

"Show us all you have got in your right-hand pocket. Turn it out."

Olcott obediently began to carry out her order slowly and methodically. He brought out first a small key, then a button, then a match-box, and a tooth-pick, and lastly a small piece of paper folded up.

"What is that?" exclaimed Madame Blavatsky.

"I do not know; I had no piece of paper," said the "old cat," in a tone of the most innocent surprise.

Madame Blavatsky seized the piece of paper, and solemnly proclaimed: "The letter of the master. Yes, it is so, the master's letter."

[1] So Madame Blavatsky used to call Colonel Olcott in his absence.

She opened and read it. There was written on the paper, in the "unmistakable" hand of the master, in English: "Certainly I was there; but who can open the eyes of him who will not see?—M."

All took the paper in turn, with palpitating reverence, read what was written on it, and turned their envious eyes on me. Alas, I had really incurred the involuntary and invincible envy of all these good people. Only think! I have hardly arrived, and not only am I honoured with a visit from the master in person, the stern, the inaccessible, whose very name must not be named, but because I express a "hair-brained incredulity," he takes the trouble a second time in twenty-four hours to make his astral voyage from the depths of Thibet to the German commercial town of Elberfeld, writes a profound note, skilfully vague and ambiguous, and puts it in Olcott's pocket, between a button and a tooth-pick!

Olcott gazed at me with such an idiotic expression, and "Madame" gazed at me so innocently, and at the same time so triumphantly, that I quite lost my head. And then, my dream and delusion had been so vivid!

"Believe" I could not; but all the glamour of the dazing *mise-en-scène* had its effect upon me, in my nervous and weak condition; I was already getting dizzy with the fumes, and beginning to ask myself: "Did I really see him? is this by any chance really his note?" And then *she* was there, this old, sick woman, suffering tortures from her deep-seated maladies, looking death full in the face, and then looking full in the face at me, as a man looks whose conscience is clear, who feels his own innocence and fears no reproach!

There must have proceeded from this terrible and unhappy woman some sort of magnetic attraction, not to be translated into words, which so many calm, healthy and judicious people experienced in their own persons. I was so sure of myself; and lo, she was making me waver!

"Tell me," she asked, fixing on me the turbid gleam of her eyes, "can you take your oath that you only had a delusion, and that this note is not the master's writing?"

"I do not know," I replied. "To-morrow morning I shall come to bid you good-bye. I am wanted at home, and to-morrow I shall leave."

XI.

And next day I did come to bid her good-bye. I was taken into a large and lofty room, which served as her study and bedroom. The masters of the house had done everything for her comfort, and she was among surroundings worthy of her. Helena Petrovna was lying, all swollen, on a great bed, and groaning.

As I looked upon her perfectly grey face, which betrayed extreme suffering, I simply did not recognise the "Madame" who yesterday evening, though she could hardly move in her arm-chair, was still energetic, and at times even cheerful.

"My God! What is the matter with you?" I asked.

"I almost died last night, my dear," she groaned; "it got at my very heart, and so—look here."

With an effort she got her hand from under the bed-clothes. It was no more a hand; it was but an inflexible thick log.

"How about the doctor?"

She smiled contemptuously.

"One is actually coming from England, he will be here to-morrow or the day after. But what does it matter? If you die, you die; we shall all come to that. What does a doctor matter, my dear man? If the 'master' wishes, I shall be up again directly,

that has happened before now: and if he does not wish, who can help me?"

I was ill at ease, grieved and sorry for her to the last degree.

"Do you mean to go away? To-day?" she asked.

"Yes, I must."

"Don't go away," she suddenly whispered in a peculiar tone. "Can't you stay with me three or four days? Have a little pity on me."

Her voice broke, and tears started from her eyes.

"See, I am alone," she went on, amid sobs visibly rising to her throat; "all these people are strangers, strangers; they nurse me and attend to me, but I am sick of seeing them; I should like to beat them, to spit at them. They are all loathsome to me—strangers. But you are my own, a kinsman, a Russian. My friend above price, you, my dear child, do not desert an old woman like me at such a time. If I die, do you close my eyes with a kindred Russian hand. And then there is another thing; I have just finished the *Blue Mountains*, and it must be sent to Katkoff; now the manuscript can't be sent in its present state; alas, I can't write good Russian; it wants corrections, and great ones too; it is no good my thinking of it; take it, for God's sake, and correct it. Then I will send it. And it is so necessary to send it at once; I have not got a farthing of money of my own, the society gives me very little, and it is not very pleasant to live at other people's expense. For God's sake do me this kindness, it is truly a good act, I shall not forget your goodness either in this world or in the next. Oh, it is so bad,"

She groaned, and tears again started to her eyes.

Needless to say that she touched and disturbed me completely, and in the end vanquished me. I told her that I would stay two or three days, or even a week if she wanted me, and that I was prepared to set about reading the *Blue Mountains* at once.

It was something to see how she thanked me! Though I very soon discovered why it was essential for her to keep me at Elberfeld, I still think that the torments of loneliness among foreigners, and her attraction to myself as one of her own kin, a Russian, were genuine. If she was only playing a part even then, she played it inimitably. Most probably she was genuine, and was playing a part at the same time; in her the irreconcilable was reconciled.

By the evening she was better, enough to put on her black sacque and get into her arm-chair. I was able to look about me, and to acquire some information about the fresh faces which surrounded me. At the time there were not many of them; only Gebhard with his wife and son, and the Arundales.

I had a good deal of work to do in correcting the manuscript of the *Blue Mountains*, as "Madame" was in fact not distinguished by the correctness of her Russian, in spite of the originality and vigour of her style. It was this work which prevented my being a witness of a phenomenon which took place only a few yards from me, in the next room. Helena Petrovna was lying on her bed, Olcott was sitting at her feet, and Miss A had placed herself in an arm-chair in the middle of the room, and was playing with a little boy. He was not usually admitted into "Madame's" room, and it is easy to suppose that

he had been called in on this occasion in order to distract Miss A's attention.

Suddenly Miss A called out, and when I entered the room she was holding in her hand a letter which had fallen at her feet from above. The letter proved to come from Mahatma Morya; and in it, far from calling her a "little beetle," he highly flattered her self-respect. This phenomenon secured her for the Theosophical Society.

The same day there arrived from Cambridge, F. Myers, one of the founders and most active members of the London Society for Psychical Research, and his brother Dr. Myers, who had undertaken to express an opinion on "Madame's" illnesses. The two stayed, like myself, at the Hotel Victoria. In the evening I had a long conversation with F. Myers, who, by his sincerity and earnestness, produced on me a most favourable impression, which my further acquaintance with him has only strengthened. He begged me in the first place to tell him how I had seen Mahatma Morya, and when I had done so he began to urge me to communicate the fact to the London society in writing.

"I never considered that I had any right to refuse to give a written confirmation of the occurrence," I replied; "and if you need my narrative for serious investigation, it is at your service. For you the fact is undoubtedly important, but I cannot understand why Madame Blavatsky clutches at it in this way. Of course, it has all the appearance of an hallucination produced by circumstances, or even of a vivid dream. Moreover, I myself look on it in precisely this light; and meanwhile not only have I no other

valid grounds for admitting the reality of communications from the Mahatmas to any of us, but the very existence of these Mahatmas is to me quite problematical."

"I do not know if you are right," said Myers; "that will be seen from our further investigations. In any case, your communication, by the rules of our society, must consist only of a simple detailed account of facts, without any commentaries or criticisms of your own."

"My account shall be simple and detailed," I said; "but if I am not allowed to say in addition that I consider my experience as anything but a reality, then I cannot give it you in writing. The matter is too serious. In a lady's drawing-room people may chatter and imagine as much as they like; but once we set about a serious investigation of psychical phenomena, we find ourselves in the presence of clear obligations and quite different claims. Do not lose sight of the fact that I am in no way a witness from the theosophical camp, but an inquirer like yourself, so far as my means and circumstances permit. I am only disturbed and interested, and wish to know the actual truth."

And so we decided.

In the Report of the London Society for Psychical Research my experience is inserted; and though, in obedience to the rules of the society, I do not myself analyse it, yet I do not in any way admit its reality. The society, moreover, considered it to be a vivid dream, and declared that I "do not regard it as affording any evidence of occult agency".

In two days I had finished getting Madame

Blavatsky's manuscripts into some sort of order, and took my departure from Elberfeld, leaving "Madame" in a state of health which, though it did not, according to Dr. Myers, give any cause for immediate alarm as to her life, was still very serious. When parting with me she was again very touching; and I told her that, though I had now nothing whatever to do with her Theosophical Society, my heart ached for herself personally, and in all sincerity I was very anxious to do what I could for her.

[Mr. Solovyoff seems to be under some misapprehension as to one point of his conversation with Mr. Myers. Mr. Myers can certainly not have said that "by the rules" of the Society for Psychical Research the narrative must not be accompanied by any commentaries or criticisms, as no such rule exists. What he believes himself to have said is that the committee would regard as evidence only the mere statement of facts, and could not be bound by any views or comments of Mr. Solovyoff's own.

The words in the report to which Mr. Solovyoff refers occur in Mrs. Sidgwick's "Note on certain Phenomena not dealt with in Mr. Hodgson's Report" (*Proceedings*, iii., 395). They are as follows: "Since writing the above I have learnt that, owing to events which have since occurred, Mr. Solovyoff no longer regards his experience as affording any evidence of occult agency".]

XII.

SOME time after my return to Paris I received the following letter:—

"DEAR V. S.,

"*Tout est perdu—(même) l'honneur.* What am I to do? If you too have confessed to me that you suspect me to be sometimes capable of substituting fraudulent in the place of real manifestations, you, my good and dear friend, what can I expect from my enemies? Madame Coulomb has got her way. She has written letters which she says are from me, and publishes them (I have not even seen them yet) in a Madras missionary paper. And these letters are said to reveal a whole system of organised fraud. But I have never written two lines to her![1] It turns out that our Mahatmas are made of bladders, muslin, and masks! You saw bladders that night, so now you know. Olcott has several times seen the master, and has twice spoken to K. H. face to face—both of them in the form of bladders, etc. Mohini will go to you in two days, that is to Paris, on Thursday; so you will tell him, and he will explain matters. But how you can help me, in spite of all your good-will, I do not know. You say that you will have nothing

[1] It is perfectly clear, not only from Hodgson's report, but from her own letter to me of 3rd January, 1885, which I shall give later, that there were letters from her to Madame Coulomb which she did not deny.

more to do with the society; but I am ready, for the sake of the society, for an abstract idea, to give up not only my life but my honour. I have sent in my resignation, and shall retire from the scene of action. I will go to China, to Thibet, to the devil, if I must, where nobody will find me, where nobody will see me or know where I am; I will be dead to every one but two or three devoted friends like you, and I wish it to be thought that I am dead; and then in a couple of years, if death spares me, I will reappear with strength renewed. This has been decided and signed by the 'general' himself.[1]

"First of all, you can say to each and all in Paris that since, in spite of all my efforts, in spite of my having sacrificed to the society life and health and my whole future, I am suspected not only by my enemies but even by my own theosophists, I shall cut off the infected limb from the sound body; that is, I shall cut myself off from the society. They have all clutched at the idea with such delight, Olcott and Madame Gebhard and the rest, that I have not even met with any pity. I leave the moral to you. Of course, I shall not depart into the 'wilderness' till Olcott, who starts for India by the first steamer, has arranged matters at Adyar, and exposed and proved the conspiracy—they gave the Coulomb woman 10,000 rupees, as is now proved, in order to destroy the society; but when all this has settled down, then I shall go off—where, I do not know yet; it is all the same, besides, so long as

[1] I had once said to her in joke that she ought to call Mahatma Morya the "general," not the "master"; "Colonel Olcott," "General Morya," and so on.

it is somewhere that nobody knows. I can address my letters to Katkoff through you. Of course, Olcott will know where I am, but the rest may think what they like. The more absurd such ideas the better. Now, here you can give me real help. I shall trust you entirely, and I can and will direct the society better from a distance than on the spot.

"There, my dear friend, that is all. The rest I will tell you face to face; for I want to come and see you for a few days without any one knowing it, if you will have me. Answer at once, and don't try to dissuade me, for this is the only hope both for me and for the society. The effect of my resignation publicly announced by myself will be immense. You will see. And do you make haste to let it be known in Petersburg, say in the *Rebus* there, that our society is not founded for the production but for the investigation of phenomena; not for the deification of Mahatmas, but for a world-wide cause, and to show that faith in the supernatural is superstition, folly; but that faith, *i.e.*, science, the knowledge of the forces of nature of which our scientific men are ignorant, is the duty of every civilised man; and that as half the theosophists and all the spiritists consider me, some of them a powerful medium and some a charlatan, I am tired of it all; and since I love the society better than life, I am leaving it for a time of my own free will in order to save the scandal. For God's sake do this at once, and it will not be too late. Mohini will explain to you all the conspiracy in Madras against Adyar and the society. Discredit these vile Calvinistic missionaries; be a friend to me. And meanwhile answer. I want to start for London

at the end of this week. Do me a service. Ask at Rue Byron 11 *bis*, if there is a 'chromophotographic' artist, Madame Tchang, living there; and if she has left, where she has gone. But she must neither see you nor know who you are. Oh, if I could only see you and talk it over, and arrange and get your advice. Now it is war, for life and death.

"We put our trust in the Mahatmas, and shall not be confounded for ever.

"Yours to the grave,

"H. P. BLAVATSKY."

Together with all this, at the end of the letter, evidently in order to win me completely, was a most curious postscript; an "astral" note from Mahatma Koot Hoomi, in his usual blue pencil, the authenticity of which can be attested by any expert. And this is what the sage Mahatma, having taken the trouble to leave his Thibetan solitude, vouchsafed to write to me in French: "Et les 'Mahatmas' ne l'abandonneront pas, mais, la situation est furieusement *sérieuse*. O. est bête, mais il n'y en a pas d'autre.—K. H."

The wise Mahatma, by frankly admitting Olcott's stupidity to me, spoilt the whole thing. I do not know what impression this letter of "Madame's" would have produced upon me in respect of its sincerity; but in the "astral postscript" of Koot Hoomi I, without being an "expert," could not help recognising the style, and even the undoubted though disguised handwriting, of Madame Blavatsky; and this at once gave me solid ground to stand on. I no longer doubted that here the

matter was not straightforward at all. Of course, I did not carry out either of "Madame's" requests; I made no declaration whatever, then or afterwards, either in newspapers or reviews, concerning the Theosophical Society or Madame Blavatsky; nor, again, did I try to hunt up any "chromophotographiste," who was "neither to see me nor know of me"; all this would have been at least absurd.

I was so irritated by Koot Hoomi's "astral postscript" that at the first moment I was inclined to appeal at once to Madame Blavatsky to forget all about my existence. But I should have repented if I had followed this first impulse; that very day, at Madame de Morsier's, I met the most convinced and honest of the French theosophists; and they, in spite of all the obviousness of the deception, admitted the postscript to be the authentic work not of "Madame's" hand but of Koot Hoomi's. This absolute blindness on the part of people who were perfectly rational in everything but the question of "Madame's" impeccability, forced me finally to adhere to my original plan. Whatever came I would collect such proofs of all these deceptions as should be sufficient not only for me but for all these blind dupes. I would no longer give way to the involuntary sympathy and pity, which, in spite of everything, still attracted me to Helena Petrovna. I would in the first place deal only with Madame Blavatsky, the thief of souls, who was trying to steal my soul too. She was duping me under the veil of personal friendship and devotion; she was trying to entangle and exploit me; and so my hands were free. Let her look on me as a friend, in other

words as her blind and absolute dupe; for if she got into her head the faintest suspicion of my object, of course I should attain nothing whatever. In any case, whatever happened, I should have more pity for her than she had for me, and I would do my best in every way to get her to listen to the counsels of reason, in order to lessen the scandal; and to this end I was prepared to give her the best advice, because she was a Russian. But if she was stubborn, I would expose her in the eyes of everybody, even though she was a countrywoman. The first thing needful now was that we should meet; I could not go to London, let her come to Paris; fortunately, this was what she herself wished.

And I wrote to her begging her to come straight from Elberfeld without fail. In a couple of days Madame de Morsier informed me that she had received a letter from "Madame," in which she begged her to meet Mohini, who was to arrive by a certain train.

"It is essential that he should be met," Madame de Morsier explained to me; "you see he is coming alone, and, as his French is very bad, he will be entirely lost. Can he not stay with you? "Madame" could not make up her mind to ask you straight out for this, as she did not know if you would think it proper, so she left it in my hand."

"I have a spare room, quite by itself," I replied, "and he will not be any burden to me with his vegetarianism. To be sure, his bronze face and strange costume will make the people in our *impasse* talk; but that is all the same to me."

We went together to the railway station, and met

the young Brahmin. He handed me a letter from "Madame". She wrote as follows:—

"DEAR V. S.,

"I tried to do as you wish, but it is impossible. To go to Paris alone, when I can hardly walk, would be madness. I shall go to London on Monday. I shall remain (for I cannot help it) a couple of weeks in London, and then I shall come to you in Paris for one week or two, as you wish. *No one must know* where I am except Gebhard, who is entirely devoted to me and the cause. I have resigned, and now there is the strangest mess. The general ordered this strategy, and he knows. I have, of course, remained a member, but merely a member, and I am going to vanish for a year or two from the field of battle. This letter will be handed to you by Mohini. He will stay in Paris till Tuesday. Gebhard will go with me when I wish, and will take me where I wish. But where I am to go so that none but a few devoted friends may know where I am, I positively cannot tell.

"Understand, my dear V. S., that it is *essential for my plan* to vanish without a trace for a time. Then there will be a reaction, and to my advantage. I should like to go to China, if the Mahatma will permit; but I have no money. If it is known where I am, all is lost. Now help me with your advice. The master commanded this, and that in a general way; but left the details and the carrying out to me, at my own risk and peril, as always. If I break down, so much the worse for me. And then there is Russia; you can help me there. Say that in consequence of the conspiracy of which Mohini will

tell you, and of my health, I have been obliged to give up active work for a year or eighteen months. And that is the truth; I have no strength left. And now I will finish the second part of the *Caves*, so it will be all the better. But my programme, if you approve, is this: let us be heard of as mysteriously as possible, and vaguely too. Let us theosophists be surrounded now by such mystery that the devil himself won't be able to see anything, even through a pair of spectacles. But for this we must write, and write, and write. So, till we meet again. Mohini will tell you all.

"Yours ever,

"H. BLAVATSKY."

Mohini told very little, and it was impossible to gather from his words precisely what was going on. One thing was clear: the theosophists, with "Madame" at their head, had taken fright in good earnest; it was not without reason that Koot Hoomi had written to me that "la situation est *furieusement* sérieuse". Mohini stayed three days, gave the Paris theosophists three lectures, and went off to London to give evidence to the Society for Psychical Research.

After his departure I received the following letter from Madame Blavatsky, who was already in England:—

"9 VICTORIA ROAD, KENSINGTON.

"DEAR V. S.,

"This is my new address, for a fortnight, not longer. They are sending me out to Egypt, and then to Ceylon—nearer home, but not home. It shall be done as the master has commanded—not to

go back to Madras till Olcott has settled things; but to stay in Europe is equally impossible. We have thought and thought, but thought out nothing. We have not money enough to scatter and live each separately. Some theosophists are going with me now to Ceylon (Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Oakley, who are starting for Madras), but for me to go alone without any one is not to be thought of.

"My rheumatism is again about in my shoulder, and a little all over me. If it attacks me again as it did at Elberfeld, then good-bye—it will fly to the heart.

"Now how are we to meet? I cannot go to Paris when I can hardly walk. Lord, how I should like to see you once again! Is it really impossible for you to come here, even for a couple of days? I know that we ought to have a meeting; but what am I to do if fate does not permit it? If I had only been a little better, I would have come. I am dreadfully sorry now that I did not pass through Paris. But I was not alone, and it was impossible to throw over Mrs. Holloway when she had come to Elberfeld with me, and *for my sake alone.* Write and advise me, my friend. It is dreadful if I am not to see you again before I start. There is a fearful uproar going on in India. It is a war to the death with the missionaries. *They or we!* 220 students of *Christian College,* all Hindus, have refused to attend the courses and have left the college, after this dirty plot of the missionaries and the letters they have printed as mine, and the notes to the Coulombs; they have come over to us in a body.

"*Que c'est un faux, est tout à fait évident.* Only a

person who is entirely ignorant of India, such as this Madame Coulomb, could have written such nonsense as they have written there. For instance, *I* write of the conjuring tricks which I have arranged for the benefit of the 'Maharajah of Lahore,' when there is no such person in India as the Maharajah of Lahore![1] and so on, and so on. Forgery has already been proved in the case of two or three letters, but the scandal is frightful. You can imagine how they fear and hate me, when a week before the publication of these forged letters, on the day of the municipal elections in Calcutta, there were posted at all the corners of the streets, literally in thousands, bills announcing 'The Fall of Madame Blavatsky'. Well, it is a dodge, and I must indeed be a terrible person to them; it is all the Scotch Calvinistic missionaries, a most vile mean sect, true Jesuits minus the wisdom and craft of the latter. But I am not fallen yet, and please God I will let them see it. My 'fall' shall be a triumph yet, if I do not die.

"Send me an answer, dear man. Tell me if you have finished the French *Isis*, part ii. Send it on if you do not want it. Madame Novikoff would greatly like to make your acquaintance. Oh, if you would only come here!

"Yours to the grave,

"H. BLAVATSKY."

[1] It appears from Hodgson's inquiries that H. P. Blavatsky in her letters to the Coulombs used to speak of certain persons by nicknames invented by her and known to her correspondents. Thus a certain Padshah was called King. It was entirely in accordance with Madame Blavatsky's habits to call people by nicknames, both in letters and in conversation.

Some time passed without a word from Madame Blavatsky. At last I wrote to inquire after her. I received the following reply :—

"DEAR V. S.,

"For God's sake do not accuse me of indifference. There is a most abominable conspiracy against me ; and if we do not take it in time, all my ten years' work will be lost. Later on I will explain, or Olcott. Olcott is starting for Adyar from Marseilles on the 20th. He leaves London on Wednesday, to-morrow evening, and will be in Paris on the morning of the 14th. He stops at a hotel, you will learn where from Madame de Morsier. For God's sake come if you can. I and the devoted theosophists who are going to Adyar with me have taken a little house here together, where I shall stay for two, or at the very most three weeks ; then I am going to Egypt, where I shall stay some days. It is impossible to say everything in a letter. Do write, if only a few words. If you only knew what a terrible position I am in, you would not think whether I wrote or not. O Lord, if I could but see you ! Please write. Olcott will explain all to you.

"Your ever devoted

"H. BLAVATSKY."

Olcott came, and had no fresh news to give, beyond what I already knew from Helena Petrovna's letters. As I looked on the president of the Theosophical Society I could not but recall the testimonial which Mahatma Koot Hoomi had given him.

It must, however, be observed that in spite of his disagreeable position the colonel wore a truly martial

air, and kept boldly repeating: "Oh, this is nonsense. I will go and put it all right."

In a few days I wrote again to Madame Blavatsky, once more begging her to come to Paris. She replied: "Too late, dear V. S.; telegram after telegram is calling me home.[1] There is such a hubbub there that the world is upside down. Hartmann, one of our theosophists at Adyar, has thrashed a missionary half dead for a lampoon on the society and me. Now the battle is beginning, and it is for life and death. I shall lay down my old bones for the true cause: do not bear me ill-will, my dear friend. Do not be afraid, the master will support me. I am going with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Oakley, friends of Madame de Morsier. They have even sold their house, and are going with me either to conquer the foe together or to die. In the aid of Parabrahm we put our trust, and we shall not be ashamed for ever. Think what devotion! You see they have broken up their whole career. I shall stay not more than a fortnight at most in Egypt, and then home. We start from Liverpool on Nov. 1 in the steamer *Clan Mac Carthy*, and we shall stop in Alexandria. I will write you from there and tell you everything. Good-bye for a long time.

"Your ever devoted

"H. Blavatsky."

She started, and I was left without having carried out my plan, and thinking it doubtful if I should ever

[1] She had evidently quite forgotten that it was not long since she had written to me quite differently about the decisions and commands of the "master".

take it up again. Could I suppose that I had not parted with her for ever, and that I should see her again in a few months, and fully attain my goal? I imagined that she would be brought home not alive but dead.

Three months had passed when I suddenly received a huge packet from Madras. It contained photographic groups of some frightful Hindu faces, views of Adyar, a portrait of "Madame" herself, not dead but alive, and the following letter :—

"ADYAR, MADRAS, *3rd January*, 1885.

"DEAR KIND V. S.,

"I am worn out and harassed, but still living, like an old cat with nine lives. It is a conspiracy, my dear man, according to all the rules of Jesuitical art. Will you say now that the master does not protect me, openly and palpably? Any other in my place could not have been saved by God Himself and the hundred devils, had I been as innocent as the babe at the font! And I have only to show myself, and I am triumphant! Only fancy, they have printed letters with my name, some forty notes and letters, the most silly and senseless in their contents generally, but many of them in my style, and all referring to phenomena which actually occurred. They (the letters) are all supposed to give instructions as to the best way of taking in some dignitary or other; all this with names and titles in full, and with the usual jeers at the supposed 'fools'. All this has been published by the missionaries, who, as is now proved, bought them of these scoundrels, who had been turned out of the society for theft and slander, for 3000 rupees, with commentaries and

explanations. Even before they appeared in print there were distributed throughout India as many as 50,000 printed announcements of 'The Fall of Madame Blavatsky. Exposure of her Tricks and shameless Frauds. Fall of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. The Great Adept a Doll of Bladders and Muslin'—all in big letters, and posted up on all the street corners of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, etc. For the space of four months the newspapers, which do not even wait and give me time to reply from Paris whether I wrote such letters and when, have been openly declaring that I am guilty, arguing *en conséquence*, and abusing me in Billingsgate language. Then the American and London papers take up the part of a Greek chorus; and so the game goes on. Hundreds of theosophists are compromised, and made into laughing-stocks. Not one has wavered, they all stand by me in mass. They have proved that the letters are forged, that the Coulombs are scoundrels and thieves, and therefore may have imitated my writing with the missionaries (as is now proved); they are told that they are fools, that the phenomena do not exist, and never can exist in the world; *ergo*, the explanation by trickery is most natural, especially as Blavatsky is a criminal, a well-known Russian spy (well-known, indeed! Rubbish!). The papers are burying me a little too soon; they thought that it was not possible for me to return to India at any time. At last, when they found that I was coming back in spite of all this, they begin to cry that *c'est le courage du désespoir*. So much for that. Meanwhile I went to Cairo. There I learnt through the consuls (Hitrovo gave me great assist-

ance, and a letter to Nubar Pasha) that the Coulombs are fraudulent bankrupts who had decamped on the sly by night, and had several times been in prison for slander. She is a well-known charlatan and 'sorceress,' who revealed buried treasure for money, and was caught red-handed—*i.e.*, with the ancient coins which she used to bury beforehand, and so on. The French consul gave me official authority to hang them (!), and entrusted me with a power of attorney to get 22,000 francs from them. Countess della Sala, veuve Beketoff, née princesse Vera Gagarine, has turned theosophist, princess Hussein is ours, so is the wife of the Khedive's brother. Maspéro, le directeur du Musée de Boulak, le grand Egyptologiste, *idem*. I left Suez for home after a fortnight's stay in Cairo. *Fin de l'acte premier.* The curtain falls. Act II. I sail in company with Mr. and Mrs. Cooper Oakley (ami de Madame de Morsier), and the Reverend Leadbeater (a week before our departure from London he was a parson, *un curé*, and now he is a Buddhist), and we sail with a party of eight disgusting missionaries, with whom we all but quarrelled every day about myself. These four males and four females of American Methodists had already read the lampoons of their devilish brethren the Scotch Calvinists, and they cackled. I looked at them as an elephant looks at a pug-dog, and got my own restlessness calmed down. They go for my Protestant parson, and he goes from them to me, in my defence. In Ceylon I took public vengeance on them. I sent for the high priest of the Buddhists, and introduced the English parson theosophist to him; I proclaimed in the hearing of every one that he wished to enter into

Buddhism. He blushed, but was not greatly disturbed, for he had seriously made up his mind to do it, and in the evening a solemn ceremony was performed on shore in the temple of Buddha. The parson theosophist uttered the *pansil (les cinq préceptes)*; a lock of hair was cut from his head; he became a Buddhist and a novice, and—I was revenged. In Ceylon we were met by Olcott, Hartmann, and many theosophists; a whole company of us set off for Madras. The day before our arrival (Gebhard le jeune, you remember, Rudolphe, was with us too) a new villainy had been done in Madras. In the name of the Coulombs the missionaries issued a pamphlet in which they added several new calumnies to the old; for instance, that in the year 1872 (when I was in Odessa), I was giving *séances* in Cairo, that I produced manifestations by fraud, that I took money for it, was found out and dishonoured. Fortunately I had asked Hitrovo in Cairo to get from the vice-consul, who knew me in Egypt in 1871, and used to come to see me, and was considered a friend of mine, a sort of certificate or testimonial of proper conduct. Foreseeing that Madame Coulomb, whom I knew at the time in Egypt, would tell lies against me, I put to the consul all the questions which could arise through her in such a case, and received a reply on all the points, stamped with the consular seal; to the effect that the consul knew me, that he used to see me every day, and that he neither saw any ill conduct on my part, nor heard of any. Well, we arrived; the missionaries were drawn up on shore to enjoy my disgrace. But before the anchor had been

cast, a whole crowd of our theosophists was swarming over the deck. They threw themselves down and kissed my feet, and at last hurried us on shore. Here there was a dense mass of people; some thirty vans with bands, flags, gilded cars and garlands of flowers. I had no sooner appeared on the wharf than they began to hurrah. I was almost deafened by the furious cries of triumph and delight. We were drawn, not by horses, but by theosophists, in a chariot preceded by a band walking backwards. The Brahmins blessed us, and all welcomed and cheered us. After an hour's procession, during which all the missionaries disappeared as if they had rushed off to hell, we were taken to the town-hall, where we found 5000 people to complete my deafness. Lord, if you had only been there; how proud you would have been of your countrywoman! Imagine 307 students of that very Christian College, whose missionary professors had hatched all this plot, signing an address which they publicly presented to me and read aloud amid the loud applause of the public (Hindu, of course). In this address, which I send you as a memento, and beg Madame de Morsier to translate, they say what you will see, and abuse their own principals. The chief point is that not one of them is a theosophist, they are merely Hindus. Then I was obliged to get up and make a speech. Imagine my position! After me Olcott spoke, Mrs. Oakley and Leadbeater. Then they took us home, where I spent the first night in fever and delirium. But there was no time for being ill now; on the 25th (we arrived on December 23rd) our anniversary began, and some

hundreds of people had already collected. I demanded that they should let me go into court with a suit against the Coulombs and the missionaries, but they would not permit it. At last a deputation of our delegates begged me not to take any step without the consent of the committee of the Grand Council, as the quarrel was rather a Hindu national than an international affair, and I, H. P. Blavatsky, was only a transparent pretext selected in order to crush the society. They say that my enemies are only seeking and longing to lure me into court, as all three English judges are on the side of the missionaries; that the libel is entirely founded on phenomena and Mahatmas in whom and in whose powers neither the law nor the ordinary public believe; in a word, that they are trying to get me into court, to catch me in my words when provoked, and to condemn me to imprisonment; *i.e.*, to kill the society and morally kill me. This turns out even more transparent than Madame Smirnoff's calumny! So I have left myself in the hands and at the disposition of the committee. They sat three days and three nights on the letters and documents, and called more than 300 witnesses, six of them Europeans, the rest *les natifs*. They brought in a verdict entirely acquitting me, and many letters were shown to be forgeries of my handwriting.[1] One theosophical rajah offers me by letter 10,000

[1] Why she invents that the letters were in the hands of the Theosophical Committee is absolutely unintelligible. It was always very easy to catch her lying, as she used constantly to forget her own words, assertions and depositions. As for the verdict of acquittal brought in by her own accomplices, she had of course no reason to be anxious.

rupees, another 30,000 rupees, another two villages, for legal expenses, if I sue them, but the committee will not permit it. 'You,' they say, 'are the property of the society. The conspiracy is not against you but against theosophy in general. Sit still, we will defend you.' Even the public understand at last that it is a trick of the missionaries. Several letters have appeared in the papers advising me to be on my guard and not to fall into a trap. Lord, what a position! Here is the London Psychical Society (your friend Myers)[1] sending out a member to make inquiry. He too finds that it is a huge plot (!). Meanwhile I am 'sitting by the sea and waiting for the weather'. The solemnity of the anniversary was immense. When the pamphlets are ready I will send them all. Meanwhile I send groups of the delegates and a group of the residents, all chelas of the Mahatmas. Once on a time, dear friend, you wrote and said that my honour and reputation were dear to you. Do defend me in the *Rebus*, in the name of all that is sacred. You see they will believe in Russia, and this will be a disgrace. You are my one friend and defender, for God's sake, my angel, do intercede for me. Write the truth in the *Rebus*, to prevent their believing in the tattle of the newspapers. And there is another thing. You worried me to send Katkoff my *Blue Mountains* as soon as possible. Well, I sent it from Elberfeld in an insured parcel at the end of September or beginning of October, and to this day there has not been a word from him. I do not even know if he has received the manuscript, or

[1] [Dr. Hodgson was sent out by the committee of the S. P. R. at Prof. Sidgwick's expense.—TR.]

has only not made up his mind to print. He is writing to me to hurry up the second part of the *Caves*, but not a word about the *Blue Mountains*. Do for God's sake write and find out at the office whether it is to be published, or if it is lost. Ill luck on every side! May you be well and happy if possible. Answer me soon; I don't believe that you have turned my enemy too. My greetings to Madame de Morsier and all our friends.

"Yours to the end of the world,

"H. BLAVATSKY.

"Oh, if I could only see you once more alive!"

The reader will himself perceive the importance of these extraordinary letters, especially of the last, for the appreciation of a woman who has made so much stir, as well as for the appreciation of her "cause," which, far from having died with her, has been constantly spreading. The letters are peculiarly interesting when compared with the real circumstances and facts set out in Hodgson's investigation, and published a year later by the London Society for Psychical Research.

XIII.-XV.

[THESE chapters contain, in some sixty pages, an abridgment of the Report of the Committee on Theosophical Phenomena, in which Mr. Hodgson's report is incorporated. This our readers will find in vol. iii. of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research.* We here give only Mr. Solovyoff's final criticisms.

After giving Mr. Hodgson's four conclusions on pp. 312-13 of *Proceedings*, vol. iii., he goes on to say :—]

Here I think Hodgson should have stopped, as his task was completely and conscientiously fulfilled. Though his report is somewhat diffuse, and is generally speaking, from the external point of view, not very skilfully put together, the internal contents of it are entirely satisfactory. All the facts are collected and impartially investigated, and the frauds of H. P. Blavatsky and her confederates are unanswerably exposed. But Hodgson was not satisfied with this. He wished, by the side of the facts which he had investigated, to express his final judgment on the founders of the Theosophical Society, Blavatsky and Olcott, and here he made two very great blunders. He asks what Madame Blavatsky's motive was in organising a complete system of fantastic imposture. He answers that many suppose it to have been only a morbid mania, the

idée fixe of the creation of a new religion. But a nearer acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky's character shows the insufficiency of such a supposition. Did she act from cupidity? No; he regards such an imputation as even less founded than the first. Nor does he think that she thirsted for notoriety and fame. What then was the motive? It was this: "she was a Russian spy," he decides.

But this he had to prove, and to prove exactly as he proved her fraudulent phenomena and all her other deceptions; yet he has no evidence of any sort, for it is impossible to regard as evidence the fragments he quotes from her writings, from which no serious man could draw a conclusion of the sort. But what may be beyond a serious man in general is not beyond a most serious Englishman, when once he has heard the words: "A Russian spy in India". I am sure that Hodgson reached and maintained his conclusion with perfect honesty, and that the members of the Society for Psychical Research quite honestly believed him, as did many English in their train.

None the less this honesty cannot do away with the grave blunder into which Hodgson and the "psychists" fell. H. P. Blavatsky was not a spy; and this I say, not because I believe her incapable of playing such a part, but because, in the autumn of 1885 (*i.e.*, at the time when Hodgson's investigation was completed, and his report, with all its contents, was being printed), "she was extremely anxious to become a secret agent of the Russian Government in India". If she "wished to become," it is plain that "up to that time she was not". How I learnt

this I will relate in its proper place; and at the end of my narrative I shall of course proceed to the conclusions to which it leads, to the question, that is, of the motive which guided our "modern priestess of Isis" in her melancholy career.

If Hodgson's conclusion as to Madame Blavatsky being a spy, in spite of its entire want of evidence, can still be regarded as honest, and explained by the Englishman's tendency to see Russian spies everywhere, it is much harder to find a decent ground for his verdict on Olcott. To the last he declares that the colonel was an innocent dupe, and not a confederate of Madame Blavatsky in her various frauds; while at the same time he adduces facts from which every attentive reader of the report must infallibly be convinced that Olcott is a liar and a knave, in spite of his stupidity. These facts, adduced with full knowledge of the false evidence of the president of the Theosophical Society and his share in phenomena whose fraudulence is there incontrovertibly proved, by the side of the unproved assertion of his innocence, produce a rather strange impression. One cannot but suspect in Hodgson a kind of "gentlemanliness," unintelligible in a case like this, which makes him wish to save one at least of the clique of cheats whom he has unmasked. In any case the service he has rendered the colonel is ill-timed and transparently inadequate.

[Mr. Solovyoff then goes on to give a Russian translation of the protest published by Madame Blavatsky, with comments, of which we need give only that on the sentence in which Madame Blavatsky says: "I was naturalised nearly eight years ago as a citizen of

the United States, which led to my losing every right to my pension of 5000 rubles yearly as the widow of a high official in Russia". On this Mr. Solovyoff remarks: "What will the modest and honourable N. V. Blavatsky (who though old is still alive) say, when he hears that he is a 'high official in Russia,' and that his widow was to receive, during his lifetime, a pension of 5000 rubles a year? What an irony of fate! Helena Petrovna, while still almost a child, married a middle-aged official in spite of her relations; after a stormy and almost incredible career, she died at sixty years of age, and he, though she had long given herself out as a widow, survives her."]

[A reference to the actual report in vol. iii. of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* suggests the following remarks on the preceding criticisms:—

(1) The acquittal of Olcott rests on the responsibility of the committee of the society as a whole, not on Mr. Hodgson alone, as Mr. Solovyoff seems to think. The wording of the report is as follows: "There is only one special point on which the committee think themselves bound to state explicitly a modification of their original view. They said in effect in their first report that if certain phenomena were not genuine it was very difficult to suppose that Colonel Olcott was not implicated in the fraud. But after considering the evidence that Mr. Hodgson has laid before them as to Colonel Olcott's extraordinary credulity, and inaccuracy in observation and inference, they desire to disclaim any intention of imputing

wilful deception to that gentleman." The committee held, and its surviving members still hold, that on the evidence *which they then had before them* it was just possible to regard Olcott as merely a dupe; so that, acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, they were bound to give him the benefit of the doubt, whatever their private opinions might be.

(2) The theory that Madame Blavatsky was a Russian spy was put forward on Mr. Hodgson's authority alone and was not endorsed by the committee, or indeed universally accepted. But Mr. Solovyoff's own evidence, far from condemning Mr. Hodgson, will probably be regarded as strong testimony to the acumen of his general view of Madame Blavatsky; and will remove the feeling, entertained by many at the time, that he had in this one point done her an injustice. For on her own statement, as given in chap. xx., she had some years before actually offered her services as a secret agent to the Russian Government, and had been doing her best since then to gain a position in which she could repeat the application with more hope of success. Mr. Hodgson thus came very near the truth.—TR.]

XVI.

THE spring had now insensibly stolen on, and I had heard not a sound or sign about Madame Blavatsky. After her triumphant letter she had sent me, still in January, some photographic groups of the Indian theosophists, a collection of the most incredible physiognomies, in the centre of which was inserted her globular figure with the rolling eyes, and Olcott with his spectacles, but now clothed in a white robe, and—barefoot. Herewith Olcott announced that "Madame" had been sick unto death, past all hope; that doctors had pronounced her to be dead, but that Mahatma M. had unexpectedly saved her, and that she was convalescent. After this news there was complete silence till the end of April (new style).

Suddenly I received a letter from Italy:—

"TORRE DEL GRECO, NAPLES,
"HOTEL DEL VESUVIO, *April* 29.

"DEAR VSEVOLOD SERGYEÏTCH,

"Arrived! They have brought me back half dead, and if I had stayed in India, I should have been dead altogether. 'In the mangle if not in the wash,' you see.[1] The intrigues of the Coulombs and the cursed missionaries have not succeeded, not a single theosophist has

[1] [*I.e.* (they were determined to have me) "by hook or by crook".—TR.]

deserted; they received me on my return to Madras all but with a salvo of cannons, so they must try something else. The Russians, they say, are coming to India through Afghanistan; *ergo*, the Russian woman Blavatsky must be a Russian spy. No matter that there is not the least particle of evidence for it; the missionaries spread the calumny, and for the Government, frightened at Madame Blavatsky's enormous influence over the Hindus, it was just handy; they began to declare officially that I was undoubtedly a spy. They certainly could not prove anything, but meanwhile, on mere suspicion, it might have been a matter of sending me to jail, arresting me, and doing who knows what to me. I have only now heard all this in detail; they did not tell me, and packed me off straight from my bed on to the French steamer, and sent with me Doctor Hartmann, Bavaji (a chela of Mahatma Koot Hoomi, bidden by him to follow me everywhere till death), and an English girl, Miss F., who would not leave me; and they have brought me to Naples. Here in loneliness and quiet on the slopes of Vesuvius I must either recover—or die. It must be the latter. I have taken rooms for three, or even six, months (?!!). Do not give my address to any one but Madame de Morsier. I wish you would come; the view is marvellous, the air healthy, and the living "cheaper than stewed turnip". I am paying ninety francs at the hotel for four furnished rooms, board included. For 400 francs a month the four of us live well for theosophists, no worse than a Parisian. Do come directly. One cannot say everything in a letter, and I have a great, great deal to tell you before I go off. A disease of the heart like

mine does not let one off; and then my other sicknesses do not forget me. I am very ill; dear friend, come to me. Here you can write better than in Paris, and I will inspire you with glorious subjects. Well! the Mahatmas who have again saved me from death preserve you! If I get well, I shall go to India if I am alive; if I die, Bavaji will take my body back. They have already arranged for this. The heavenly powers preserve you!

"Yours ever,

"H. P. BLAVATSKY."

I immediately replied to this letter, expressing to Helena Petrovna my satisfaction at knowing that she was no longer at the ends of the earth, but in Europe, advising her not to think about dying, and not to fall into such a minor key, and regretting that it was doubtful if I could soon come to Naples, much though I should like to do so. I communicated the contents of her letter to Madame de Morsier, who was greatly delighted, and at once sent to Torre del Greco a whole bundle of newspapers, with remarks about the Theosophical Society, etc.

In the middle of May Madame de Morsier handed me the enclosed letter which she had received.

"CHERE ET BONNE AMIE,

"Merci pour les journaux, merci pour tout. Je suis tombée encore une fois malade et je n'ai pu vous répondre plus tôt. Mais je vous supplie de m'écrire deux mots pour me dire ce que devient Solovioff et pourquoi il ne me répond pas? Je lui ai écrit deux lettres d'ici—pas un mot de lui. Serait-il malade? Ou bien a-t-il été entrainé par d'autres, et prêtant

l'oreille aux infamies débitées m'a-t-il tourné le dos, lui aussi, comme M. Myers de la Société Psychique de Londres ? Les missionaires protestants ont dépensé 45,000 roupies—Olcott m'écrit,—pour payer les faux témoins qui ont tellement menti et embrouillé les choses lors de l'enquête faite par M. Hodgson, l'envoyé de la Société Psychique pour les phénomènes, que le pauvre Hodgson a perdu la tête. Il a fini par croire que pas un phénomène, avec ou sans moi, n'était vrai, et que commençant par moi et le colonel et finissant par Damodar nous étions tous des *fraudes*, des charlatans ! Amen. Mais Solovioff est-il encore ami ou dois-je le perdre lui aussi ? De grâce répondez-moi.

"A vous de cœur,

"H. P. BLAVATSKY."

This letter at the first moment disturbed even Madame de Morsier. Even the 45,000 rupees did not avail.

"What do you think of all this ?" she asked me.

"I think that your Koot Hoomi's rose is a very precarious talisman, that our poor 'Madame' has been found out, that from her somewhat fantastic letters there is no possible means of making out the truth, and that it would be well for me to make, by way of a pendant to Hodgson, a careful and dispassionate inquiry. Unluckily I cannot possibly go to Naples now."

Still Madame de Morsier could not be shaken yet. She did not admit Madame Blavatsky's guilt, though already inclined to admit some *entraînement* on her part. In any case she was maligned, in any case she was unhappy, grievously unhappy.

With this last conclusion one could not but agree. H. P. B. had disappeared, and we had only Helena Petrovna before us, sick and weary, and by no means stranger to our hearts. I hastened to reply that my letter had evidently gone astray, and that I had only received one from her. Among other things I observed that she had with her a man who was not altogether to be trusted (I alluded to Hartmann, of whom she had told me a good deal in Elberfeld which was not attractive), and that his constant presence could not but react painfully on her. I wrote that I had not "turned my back on her" at all, and that just at the present moment I should particularly like to see her; but that I was unwell, and would come if it were possible.

I had not long to wait for her answer.

"TORRE DEL GRECO,
"*May* 23, *Saturday.*

"MY DEAR V. S.,

"We are evidently both out of luck. I am in bed again with bad attacks of rheumatism and gout. It is so cold here in the day-time, and actual frost at nights and evenings, that it might be Russia. There is something wrong with the world in the *top story*. And this is your southern Italy. No, my own father, don't come, for I shall set off myself on the first opportunity, for somewhere where, even if the climate is cold, there are warm rooms to be found without any draughty zephyrs, and one can get something to eat besides the eternal macaroni. But there will be no possibility till Katkoff sends the money for the *Enigmatical*

Tribes, which was finished in the April number of the *Russky Vyestnik*. Although it is not much, altogether 274 pages, at either seven rubles or six and two-thirds or three-quarters per page (the devil himself could not make out their accounts), yet I shall be grateful for it; it will be some six thousand francs in all in my pocket. And then I mean to start at once—if I don't die first—to the waters in Germany. But where, I don't know. Write to me, for Allah's sake, to say what waters will do good to this vile albumen, or whatever they call it, which has poisoned my blood, and brought my heart to such a state of weakness that it is not audible even in the stethoscope. Inquire of the doctors, and send me a line. And by the way, how many francs are there in a ruble? Also, can I ask Katkoff for ten rubles per printed page (160 per sheet), instead of 6 r. 71 kop. (100 per sheet)? You see, at the present contemptible value of our ruble, it is the devil knows what. In America, in New York, I get twenty-five dollars for a single column of the 'Letters from India'. If so, why should I waste my time on Katkoff? Tell me plainly; can I ask ten rubles a page or not? At present I have not got a brass farthing in my pocket. They sent off this servant of God, with three others, and 700 rupees in our pocket; not in mine, but in Bavaji's; that is what the society gave us for our sustenance, and we have to live on this money. He foolishly, poor young fellow, paid here for three months in advance. I was lying sick, and he has never been in Europe before, and is even worse than Mohini at the business of life. Thank God Hartmann has gone, and there are only three of

us now; my devoted Mary F. who has voluntarily converted herself from a worldly Bombay young lady into my nurse and lady's-maid, and my little Deb (Darbagiri Nath) whom we call Bavaji. He would go through fire and water for my sake. He has abandoned country, and caste, and society for my sake, and has solemnly vowed, in the face of all India that loves me, not to leave me while I live. But he is an innocent Hindu; he has never talked to a single woman, before me, except his own mother when he was a child; he is an ascetic, and does not know the A B C of Europe and its ways, nor even what I require. Mary is a heart of gold but an arrant fool, spoilt at home, and does not even know how to boil coffee in a coffee-pot. One cannot talk to her about anything but dress, and can only love her for her devotion. That is my situation.

"If your heart is not attracted to Hartmann, you are quite right. This dreadful man has done me more harm by his defence, and often by his deceit, than the Coulombs by open lying. One moment he was defending me in the papers, the next he was writing such 'equivokes' that even the papers hostile to me could only open their mouths and say: 'There is a friend for you!' One day he defended me in letters to Hume and other theosophists, and then hinted at such infamies that all his correspondents went against me. It was he who turned Hodgson, the representative sent by the London Psychical Society to inquire into the phenomena in India, from a friend, as he was at first, into an enemy. He is a cynic, a liar, cunning and vindictive, and his jealousy of the master, and his envy for any one on whom the

master bestows the least attention, are simply repulsive. He has turned our devoted Judge, when despatched by Olcott from Paris to Adyar, into our enemy. He set against me at one time all the Europeans in Adyar, Lane Fox, Mr. and Mrs. Oakley, Brown; the Hindus alone, who hate him and have long since taken his measure, he was unable to stir. Now I have been able to save the society from him, by agreeing to take him with me under the plea that he is a doctor. The society, and Olcott at their head, were so afraid of him that they did not dare expel him. And all this he did in order to have the sole command of me, to suck out of me all I know while I am yet alive; not to allow Subba Rao to write *La Doctrine Secrète* with me, but to write it himself under my direction. But he is greatly mistaken. I have brought him here and told him that I shall now not write *The Secret Doctrine* at all, but shall write for the Russian reviews, and I have refused to speak to him a single word about occultism. Seeing that I had vowed to keep silence and teach him nothing, he has gone at last. No doubt he will now set about telling lies about me to the German society. But it is all the same to me now. Let him lie. It was he who persuaded Bavaji to pay for three months in advance, knowing that I had no money, and must stay here whether I would or no.[1]

[1] If to the facts of Hodgson's report we add this description by Madame Blavatsky herself, the picture of Dr. Hartmann is a perfectly clear one. But Madame Jelihovsky in her articles draws from this gentleman great profit for herself. To her articles in the *Novosti* she prefixes the following motto, "The future is not far distant when the historian will be glad

"But I am writing to Katkoff and asking for my payment, my own money, for the *Enigmatical Tribes*, and then I shall go to Wiesbaden, Marienbad, or some other Bad, which I greatly need; after that I shall settle in Munich or near Vienna; it is all the same where, so long as I can find a warm room and be nearer to Russia and to X, so that when I die I may see her beside me. Advise me what I am to do.

"Of your two letters I have received one ordinary one, and the other registered, this very day only, and I am losing no time in answering. Here even the post-office seems to have gone out of its mind. One day, a few days ago, they brought me an insured letter; I gave the receipt, and was just about to

to rummage all archives, in order to find a single word about H. P. B.," and to this she appends, "Dr. Hartmann". The reader supposes that this is the famous German philosopher Edward Hartmann, who is deeply interested, as is generally known, in various unexplained phenomena; he accordingly bows reverently, thinking: "Oh, if Hartmann says so, then it means that the matter may be no farce after all". But this is only a small and innocent mystification. The words of the motto do after all belong to the theosophist Franz Hartmann, who first attached himself to Madame Blavatsky, then left her, and since, as appears from Madame Jelihovsky's articles, has again joined her. Madame Jelihovsky speaks of him (*Russkoe Obozrenie*, Nov., 1891, p. 244) as one of the best but most cool-headed appraisers of Madame Blavatsky, and in consideration of this cool-headedness she quotes his words and opinions with particular satisfaction. But what will the historian say, as he rummages all the archives to find a single word about H. P. B., when he reads this sketch of the panegyrist of H. P. B. drawn by herself? Madame Jelihovsky has no luck with the defenders and friends of "Madame".

open it, when I suddenly saw that it was not for me, but for some Mr. Blagoveshchensky at Nagasaki in Japan, and not at Naples at all. And with money in it too, it seems. But the postman had gone. Three days afterwards I handed it back at the post-office in Naples to the postmaster himself, and he was frightfully upset. It would be a good thing to publish this in Russia. So your letter has very likely gone off to Japan.

"Eternal love and friendship from

"Yours faithfully till the grave,

"H. BLAVATSKY.

"I want a philosophical journal to edit over here. But I shall have no time. My end is near, my dear friend. Write to me soon."

From this letter compared with the "triumphant" one from Adyar, with the first from Torre del Greco, and with the French one to Madame de Morsier, in spite of all Helena Petrovna's *entraînements* her really piteous plight was clear enough. She had evidently suffered a complete defeat over there, and even her marvellous rescue from death by the Mahatmas had failed to produce its due effect. She fled to Europe (for, with her character and habits, the initiative could have belonged to herself only, and not in any way to Olcott, nor to any "Council of the Society"), very ill, with companions who were of no use to her; and now she was lying in miserable surroundings, without assistance, without money, and forgotten by all. This was why she so eagerly clutched at me, and was so afraid that I might have turned against her. It was unfortunately out of the question for me to go to her, and I consoled myself

with the thought that it was now only a matter of two or three months, that I should see her somewhere or other, and at last learn everything, with circumstance and certainty.

A few days later, at a very critical moment, Helena Petrovna received "from an unknown friend" a sum of money, and was particularly anxious to learn who it was that had come to her help. She wrote to Madame de Morsier.

". . . Ah, ma pauvre amie! Les temps sont bien changés et la pauvre société de Madras étant sans le sou, je le suis aussi; de manière que cet argent est arrivé bien à propos, je vous assure. Si je pouvais écrire mes articles russes—j'en ferai bien vite; mais le malheur est que j'ai à rester alitée les trois quarts de temps. Je ne durerai pas longtemps —allez! J'accepte cet argent de l'ami inconnu sans fausse honte, mais je tiens à savoir son nom. Le maître a refusé de me le dire, en disant simplement que c'etait d'un vrai ami et que je pouvais accepter. Mais vous, ne me le direz vous pas? Est-ce la duchesse? Mais non—car pourquoi s'en cacherait-elle, et puis c'est *un ami*, et non *une amie*. Dans tout cas le Maître le connait, c'est sûr, car il a ajouté que son intuition pour les vérités occultes était grande et qu'il avait de l'étoffe en lui, quoique . . . mais je ne dois pas le dire, à ce qu'il parait. Ah, que je m'ennuie donc ici, bon Dieu! et que je voudrais m'en aller—si le maître le permettait. . . . Que fait donc Solovioff? Est-il malade toujours? Je l'aime bien, mon ami Solovioff, mais il dit des bêtises de nos Mahatmas, ce pauvre Thomas l'incrédule.

"A vous de cœur,

"H. P. BLAVATSKY."

Though unhappy, though regarding herself as for ever vanquished and disgraced, though evidently falling at times into despair, though sick and deserted, Helena Petrovna still remained true to herself. She continued to delude good folks with her "master," not in the least disturbed by the artlessness and primitiveness of these "astral" visits of the mysterious Mahatma, during which he used to make her communications which communicated nothing, and "save" her, without regard to what he saved her from. What need to invent anything more subtle and crafty, when this simple 'farce' was good enough not only for educated ladies, but even for educated men, provided only they were "friends of Helena Petrovna's"? At the same time, feeling her need of me, and while sending me her "love, friendship, and faithfulness to the grave," she was already very anxious lest I should "spoil" something, for I had spoken very disrespectfully in my letters to her of her "master," and generally about all her "Mahatma business"; so she hastens to warn Madame de Morsier against me, as an "unbelieving Thomas".

Madame de Morsier was not able to give her any information about the "unknown friend," and I sent her in reference to her "warning" a playful letter, in which I said that I had grown definitely tired of her Theosophical Society, and that I believed in none of her phenomena or Mahatmas; but for herself, my kindest Helena Petrovna, I loved her no less than she loved me, and that I intended to demolish her malicious enemy, Madame Coulomb. I added that I should soon be taking a trip to Switzerland, and hoped that we should meet, and that she

would turn aside to me on her way into Germany. I received the following reply:—

"DEAR V. S.,

"Write where you will settle down. I have decided to go to Germany for the winter; even if it is cold, at least the rooms are warm, and here I am always catching cold; so in passing I can stop where you are staying. Krishna Swami[1] is with me, and he is kind. Why do you make attacks on the society in your letters to Y too? For God's sake, if only for the sake of our personal friendship, do not desert it; poor Olcott does what his conscience bids him, and he would be delighted to sacrifice himself this instant for the good of the society. If we meet I will tell you all. But why is it that you write so obscurely? What have you made up your mind to do with this rascally Coulomb woman? Why, when I left she had persuaded the missionaries to get up a subscription for her, for the 'service she had rendered humanity and society in general by unmasking Madame Blavatsky!' The Bishop of Madras headed the list, and the missionaries collected her 5000 rupees, or 10,000 francs. She is coming to Europe 'on Madame Blavatsky's track,' as the missionary Patterson writes, the editor of the paper which is unmasking me.

"Heartily welcome! But is it not true, *comme l'innocence triomphe et le vice est puni?* How charming the world is—what a darling! What will be in the future? What has Sinnett done, as Madame X writes, in Paris? I do not understand anything.

[1] One of the many *aliases* of Bavaji.

And why do not you write me in detail? Oh, what a man you are! Her pamphlet? It is good, and so truthful! I owe her money to this day? Why, I have a letter of hers from Ceylon, eight years after I was in Egypt, in which she begs me to lend her money. I did conjuring at Cairo? But all the town knows and remembers that I was not in the place when our hired mediums, her friends, were detected in this conjuring, and I instantly turned them off and lost 600 francs myself. Oh, she is a vile woman. Let who will inquire at Cairo; they all know her there, and she is never called anything but *la sorcière* and *la voleuse*. And now the missionaries have taken her under their wing! Lord, what infamy, what a conspiracy! But enough of this abomination.

"I am writing the second part of the *Caves*. You have not answered my question about Katkoff. I have caught a cold, and was in a fever all night.

"Till we meet, dear V. S.,

"Your ever devoted

"H. BLAVATSKY."

On reading this letter I could not help feeling amazed. I knew nothing of the pamphlet of the "Coulomb woman"; but it was clear that I had now before me a fight royal of two grand "fish-wives". Only the causes of the battle were, instead of tubs of fish, the "universal brotherhood," and the "secrets of the human soul, and of nature"; and the war-cry was: "There is no religion higher than truth".

I left for Geneva, and thence for the mountains, and soon appeared high up in a little hamlet called St. Cergues, where I found myself with Madame de Morsier and her family.

XVII.

We were well off in the modest but perfectly comfortable Pension Delaigue, in the midst of a garden full of flowers. For six francs a day we were given a clean room with a soft bed, breakfast, dinner and supper; abundant meals prepared by a skilful Parisian cook. The Lake of Geneva was seen from the height like a blue pond, and Mont Blanc looked us straight in the face in all his silver grandeur. Still I sent Madame Blavatsky our address. At the end of July there was a letter from her:—

"Dear V. S.,

"Pardon me, I could not write; my right hand is so swollen that my fingers are numb. I am in a bad way. I start to-morrow to settle for the winter in Würzburg, a few hours from Munich, *i.e.*, in Bavaria. I shall winter there, and meanwhile see if the Pandour waters in Kissingen won't do my gout good. I shall go there with Bavaji and Miss F., my friend, but a great fool.

"Lord, how sick I am of life! Now do write if you cannot come yourself. It seems that it is not far from Munich to your place; but Würzburg is still some hours from the Bavarian capital. Madame X promises to come. I do not know if it will be so. But still Munich is nearer than Naples to O. Here

we have passed from cold, frost, and rain to a heat more oppressive than in India. My cordial bow to you, and eternal, unceasing love and friendship. I shall go through Rome and Verona.

"Farewell, till we meet again, or, as fate ordains, till death,

"H. BLAVATSKY."

Five days later came a telegram from Rome: "En route pour Würzburg près Munich pour hiver. Blavatsky." The same day, three hours after the first, a second telegram: "Restons Hotel Anglo-Americain, Rome, huit jours écrivez ici. Blavatsky." I telegraphed, "Come here," and explained by what route they should come. Answer on the third day: "Va banque! Partons demain Genève télégraphiez où la rencontre. Blavatsky." I telegraphed, "A St. Cergues," and waited, having agreed with Madame de Morsier that if "Madame" did not come we would meet her at Geneva.

But she came. Heavens, what a sight it was! I fancy that the inhabitants of St. Cergues must speak of it to this day as a mythological event.

At the usual hour, after dinner, about three o'clock, the Geneva diligence arrived at the Pension Delaigue. Round it, as always, there gathered a crowd to get the newspapers and letters, and to observe the new arrivals, if such there were.

Suddenly there sprang from the diligence a strange creature, something half way between a great ape and a tiny black man. Its leanness was amazing. A poor half-European sort of dress dangled on it, as though there were nothing but bones beneath; a face

the size of a fist, of a dark cinnamon colour and without any signs of vegetation; on the head a dense cap of long black curling hair; huge eyes, also perfectly black, of course, with a frightened and suspicious expression. The black man said something in English with a piping but at the same time hoarse voice.

After him emerged a clumsy young person, with a red, disconcerted and not particularly intelligent face.

The public gazed open-mouthed at the black man. But the most interesting was yet to come. The black man and the clumsy young woman, and then I and Madame de Morsier, succeeded with great difficulty in extricating from the diligence something that was shut up in it. This something was "Madame" herself, all swollen, tired out with travelling, grumbling; with a huge dark-grey face, and wide open eyes, like two round discoloured turquoises. On her head was set a very high grey felt fireman's helmet with ventilators and a veil. Her globular figure seemed yet more globular from an incredible sort of sacque in which she was draped.

After embracing us and declaring that Bavaji understood nothing at all, and that this "idiot of a girl" was so stupid that there had never been a like fool upon the earth, "Madame" set about scolding them in very choice language and worrying them without the least mercy. At last they both became incapable of understanding anything whatever, suffering was depicted on their countenances, and tears stood in their eyes.

To complete the misfortune it appeared that our

pension had not the requisite accommodation free, *viz.*, three adjoining rooms.

Somehow or other all was finally arranged, and in an hour Helena Petrovna settled in an adjacent house, dined with a poor appetite, and scolded on; the black and the young person were driven from pillar to post, unable to please her with anything, and I and Madame de Morsier sat and looked on at it all.

"There, my friends, now you see my position yourselves," she at last addressed herself to us. "Some days I can move neither hand nor foot and lie like a log, and no one to help me to anything. Bavaji only spins like a top and never stirs from his place, and this Mashka F." (she never called her anything but Mashka [1]) "is a born fool, and I curse the day when I agreed to take her with me. You see, the fact is she was dreadfully bored there at home, and thought that she would find some agreeable distractions in travelling; and can you imagine, as soon as a man shows his face she is all over ribbons, she rolls her eyes, and generally behaves herself in the most unbecoming way, though she is a Buddhist. Why she took to Buddhism I cannot conceive.

"And yet, though she is a fool"—"Madame" suddenly recollected herself—"yet, just ask her, she sees the master almost every day, when he appears to me. Mary, come here."

Mashka ran up panting, with a frightened expression on her red face.

[1] The Russian diminutive of Mary.

"Tell the truth; do you see the master?"

"Oh yes, yes; I see him."

"There now, you see! Why should she lie? And she is such a fool that she could not even make up a lie; she does see, and there is an end of it. Now go and disprove her, or say that she has hallucinations every day! And yet, according to the psychical gentleman, I invented the Mahatmas myself!"

She was positively unable to grasp the fact that her method of proof, with the aid of witnesses like Mashka and Bavaji, was extremely insufficient on European soil. When she got to the Coulombs, Hodgson, and the Protestant missionaries, there poured from her lips such contradictory assertions, and such choice abuse, that Madame de Morsier and I quite lost heart, and almost stopped her mouth and quieted her by force.

She suddenly calmed down, changed her manner, passed out of her malicious mood, and soared into other spheres. And from these other spheres was heard her inspired voice.

Her thoughts, at any rate interesting, and sometimes very deep, were always expressed by Helena Petrovna with an unusual simplicity and clearness which were an indubitable proof of true talent, and were in fact the principal magnet which drew me to her. At other times, and quite unexpectedly, she changed into a really inspired prophetess, she was entirely transfigured, and forced one to forget that after all she was no more than a most shameless impostor, whom it was one's only duty to unveil, finally and evidently for all the world; whom one

must endeavour to force to give up for ever her pernicious and revolting deceptions.

Changing hourly, and displaying in turn all her qualities and defects, herself constantly blazing and boiling, she set up a sort of whirlwind all about her, into which every one fell, though but for a time, who came into immediate contact with her. For the moment it was impossible to hold oneself straight; one's head swam. Yet, in spite of her physical sufferings, her attacks of despair, of fury and of hopelessness, she still went on to her goal. It was now necessary for her, before all things, to get me and Madame de Morsier into her hands. Her friend and assistant, Sinnett, had already communicated to her from London the detailed contents of Hodgson's report, now being prepared for the press, and straight to her heart had gone that insult; she was proclaimed an impostor, and Olcott an innocent fool.

"But do, in the name of all that is sacred, write to Myers," she begged me, "that this is idiotic on their part. If I am an impostress, then Olcott is an impostor. Of course he is a fool and credulous, but not to that degree. Why, it would be positively unnatural! And why do they want to acquit him?"

This "injustice" perturbed and irritated her in the highest degree. But she forgot even Olcott when, in the course of conversation, I told her that we should soon have to part and go in different directions.

"And where are you going?"

"I mean to spend the early autumn in Lucerne, and by October 1 I must be in St. Petersburg."

She began literally to beseech me to go with her to

Würzburg, and, well knowing that August and September in a stuffy German town would not be particularly attractive to me, she tried seduction.

"Stay two months in Würzburg, and I swear you will not repent it. What Hartmann begged for in vain you shall have—I will give you daily lessons in occultism; the master has permitted me. I will hide nothing from you. And there shall be phenomena, as many as you will."

"Helena Petrovna, don't joke; you surely know my present opinion of the 'master' and the phenomena."

"I know that you are an 'unbelieving Thomas'; but I will bring you to such a point that you will believe against your will. I give you my word of honour that I will reveal all to you, all that is possible."

But I knew that, even without this "word of honour," it would be my fate to breathe the dust of Würzburg. Of course she would not give me any "lessons in occultism," for such lessons cannot be given; but so long as I was necessary to her, so long as she was alone and abandoned even by her most devoted friends, she would do everything in her power to delude me with phenomena, and so I should get to learn everything which I wanted. I should be able to observe from every side this phenomenal nature, the like of which it would certainly never be my fortune to meet again.

I wrote to Myers that not knowing Hodgson nor his investigation, nor how exact and dispassionate it was, I should undertake one of my own; I should pass a longer or shorter time at Würzburg, where

Madame Blavatsky was to settle, and should learn everything. The results of my investigation I should report in proper time.

This letter I showed in Madame de Morsier's presence to Madame Blavatsky, and she, far from being confused, was highly delighted. She evidently calculated either on her own cunning or on my "friendship". And friendship, in her jargon, was synonymous with secrecy.

At her ease on my account, and having postponed the "lessons in occultism" to Würzburg, she turned her attention to Madame de Morsier. In the matter of the Theosophical Society there was one rather ticklish question. According to the teaching of all the ancient and modern magians, the great Goddess Isis lifted her veil only before the face of a virginally pure being, unacquainted with the passions and desires of humanity. In order to be a true adept, to learn the highest secrets and to attain the power of directing the forces of nature (in more simple words, of producing sundry phenomena), it was essential to have been a severe ascetic through life, from the cradle to the grave.

"This, you see, is why Mohini may in time become as great an adept as Morya or Koot Hoomi," Madame Blavatsky declared; "he is a virgin, and never looks on women, he is an ascetic."

By the side of all this, the Paris theosophists "knew," among other things on the word of Olcott and of Mohini himself, that "Madame" had already reached a very high initiation; that she was on one of the topmost steps of the mystic ladder, that she had unceremoniously unveiled Isis, and produced

amazing phenomena. The ascetic Mohini, at a sign from her, crawled at her feet like a reptile, and kissed the hem of her garment.

How was all this to be reconciled with the equally undoubted fact that "Madame" was madame, and not mademoiselle; that she was the "*veuve* Blavatsky"?

The question had come to a head, "Madame" had more than once been approached on the subject, and at such a perilous moment it was more than ever necessary to meet it with a decided reply. Madame de Morsier, that warm heart of gold, that fiery orator, that passionate defender of woman's rights and woman's honour, seemed certainly to be the best and cleanest sheet of paper on which such an answer could be written. But it was first necessary to try the pen, to see if it would run well; and Helena Petrovna turned upon me her enigmatic gaze.

With an art which Sara Bernhardt might envy, she confessed to me the secret of her life. All was against her; but after all the great thing was not to be *called*, but to *be*. To this day there were still current the most astounding stories as to the romantic adventures of her youth, and she was only surprised that I had heard nothing of the sort about her in Russia. But meantime, here was the truth: she had never been capable of loving passionately; men, as such, did not exist for her. "I evidently have such a fish-like nature!" From her childhood she had never had but a single passion, occultism. She married Blavatsky only in order to free herself from family tutelage; but he never was a husband

to her, and she soon ran away from him. She had wandered all her life from land to land, she had eagerly given herself to the study of occultism, she had sought and knocked till she found and it was opened to her. And now she was an old woman, the "*veuve* Blavatsky"; and in spite of all she remained a virgin, an untainted virgin.

Still there is no smoke without fire; how came it that she had the reputation of a priestess of Venus rather than of Isis? This is how it came: she had wished to save the honour of a friend, and had adopted the child of this friend as her own. She never parted from him, she educated him herself, and called him her son in the face of the world. Now he was dead.

I cannot say that I believed her; but her acting was so good, and I was not at that time in a position to guarantee the entire falsehood of the story; I knew nothing yet about her, I had no evidence to contradict the sworn statements of her confession. In any case she evidently left off well satisfied with herself, and in her first *tête-à-tête* with Madame de Morsier she admitted her too into this secret. I was not present at the conversation, but I saw the result. Madame de Morsier was deeply affected, she believed it all implicitly, and with tears in her eyes kissed Helena Petrovna's hand.

"*Ah, quel acte d'héroisme féminin,*" she kept on repeating.

XVIII.

MADAME BLAVATSKY passed eight days at St. Cergues. The weather broke up, "Madame's" rheumatism was increasing, and Mary F. had driven her to madness. It must be admitted that this young person behaved strangely enough. She used to invent herself wonderful coiffures and head-dresses, and though she could hardly speak a word of French, she set off for a country fair, and there sang and danced with the greatest animation. She ended by trying to preach Buddhism to some innocent Swiss. The sermon was for the most part limited to certain strange gestures, and the exhibition of a certain amulet which Mary F. wore on her neck instead of the cross. The unintelligible gestures and the fairly intelligible amulet certainly produced a sensation.

Madame Blavatsky made up her mind that Mashka did nothing but madden and compromise her, and it was accordingly necessary that she should be packed off to England, where her uncle lived. The decision was much assisted by the fact that a maid was found on the spot, in the *pension*, who spoke French and German, and was willing to go to Würzburg and take upon herself the multifarious duties of poor Mashka.

Bitter though life at "Madame's" side was to this Anglo-Indian Mashka, so hardly used by nature, she

still showed a dog-like devotion to her tormentor, and her unexpected ostracism deeply hurt and offended her. Tears and sobs began. But "Madame" had a nice little phenomenon ready by way of a sweet sedative. While at Torre del Greco Mashka had lost a beautiful jewelled ring. She was greatly distressed at this loss. And lo! at the moment of her departure the "master" appeared to "Madame" and left with her a ring "the same at every point," which was solemnly placed on Mashka's finger in his name. This calmed her to a great extent, and she went off without making a heart-breaking scene.

At last the weather changed for the better. It turned warm and clear. We moved from St. Cergues, and said good-bye to Madame de Morsier, who was to stay for some time longer. The parting of the two ladies was affecting. They did not think or guess that at no very distant time their relations to one another would be entirely altered, and that they were not fated to meet again in this life.

I went as far as Lucerne with Madame Blavatsky, and then decided not to continue the journey with her; she and Bavaji attracted general attention, and were the centre of the excessively amused glances of the public. I explained that I should pass some days in Lucerne, should then go to Heidelberg, and arrive at Würzburg from there. Helena Petrovna made no objections, as she had heard that she was expected in Würzburg by some friends who had come there to meet her, and would help her to settle down there.

In fact I found her at Würzburg in a very different position and mood. There had been arranged for her

very convenient and roomy lodgings in the Ludwigstrasse, the best street of the town, incomparably better and more comfortable than those she had had in Paris.

The time had now come for me to set about my investigation in earnest. I settled myself in Rügmer's Hotel, not far from the Ludwigstrasse; here I lived on the most peculiar German breakfasts and dinners, and all the time which I did not spend in sleeping, eating, and walking through the town, I passed with Madame Blavatsky. She again fell very ill; and lo! Bavaji came running up to me, all trembling with terror, and exclaimed in his piping, hoarse voice that "Madame" was very bad, and that the doctor, a famous specialist for internal complaints, was greatly alarmed.

I hurried with Bavaji to the Ludwigstrasse and found the doctor in the sitting-room. To my inquiry about his patient he replied: "I never saw anything like it in the whole course of my many years of practice. She has several mortal diseases — an ordinary person would have been dead long ago from any one of them. But hers is a phenomenal nature; and if she has lived so long, she may, for all we can tell, live on yet."

"For the moment then her life is not in danger?"

"Her life has been in danger for years, but you see she is alive. A wonderful, wonderful phenomenon."

He had all the appearance of a man who was deeply interested.

I again found Helena Petrovna all swollen up and almost without movement. But a day passed, and

she managed to crawl out of her bed to her writing-table, and wrote for several hours, gnashing her teeth with anguish. She told me that she used to work the whole night, but that, at all events, I could not verify. However that may be, pages and sheets were pouring from her pen at an astonishing rate.

Our theosophical lessons in occultism did not offer me any particular interest; it was not that she would not, but simply that she could not, tell me anything new. She passed into no state of prophetic ecstasy, and I took back untouched the note-book in which I meant to record her interesting thoughts, aphorisms and sentiments. I was waiting for the promised "phenomena," and this fact evidently troubled her. She used to press me to print an account of the "master's" appearance to me at Elberfeld, and thereby to confirm the reality of the Mahatmas' existence.

I replied that, for all my willingness to do what she wished, I could not fulfil her request, for I was more than ever convinced that no "master" had ever appeared to me, and that I had only had a vivid dream, produced on the one hand by nervous exhaustion, on the other by the fact that she had kept me nearly the whole evening looking at the dazzlingly illuminated portrait.

This drove her to despair. For the next couple of days I had a feeling as I looked at her that she was on the point of producing some sort of phenomenon. And so it turned out.

I called one morning. Helena Petrovna sat behind her great writing-table in an arm-chair of unusual dimensions, sent her as a present by Gebhard from

Elberfeld. At the opposite end of the table stood the dwarfish Bavaji with a confused look in his dulled eyes. He was evidently incapable of meeting my gaze, and the fact certainly did not escape me. In front of Bavaji on the table were scattered several sheets of clean paper. Nothing of the sort had occurred before, so my attention was the more aroused. In his hand was a great thick pencil. I began to have ideas.

"Just look at the unfortunate man," said Helena Petrovna suddenly, turning to me. "He does not look himself at all; he drives me to distraction. He imagines that here, in Europe, he can carry out the same regime as in India. He never used to eat anything there but milk and honey, and here he is doing the same. I tell him that if he goes on like that he will die, but he will not listen. And so he had an attack last night."

Then she passed from Bavaji to the London Society for Psychical Research, and again tried to persuade me about the "master". Bavaji stood like a statue; he could take no part in our conversation, as he did not know a word of Russian.

"But such incredulity as to the evidence of your own eyes, such obstinate infidelity as yours, is simply unpardonable. In fact, it is wicked!" exclaimed Helena Petrovna.

I was walking about the room at the time, and did not take my eyes off Bavaji. I saw that he was keeping his eyes wide open, with a sort of contortion of his whole body, while his hand, armed with the great pencil, was carefully tracing some letters on a sheet of paper.

"Look; what is the matter with him?" exclaimed Madame Blavatsky.

"Nothing particular," I answered; "he is writing in Russian."

I saw her whole face grow purple. She began to stir in her chair, with an obvious desire to get up and take the paper from him. But with her swollen and almost inflexible limbs, she could not do so with any speed. I made haste to seize the paper and saw on it a beautifully *drawn* Russian phrase.

Bavaji was to have written, in the Russian language with which he was not acquainted: "Blessed are they that believe, as said the Great Adept". He had learnt his task well, and remembered correctly the form of all the letters, but he had omitted two in the word "believe". [The effect was precisely the same as if in English he had omitted the first two and last two letters of the word.]

"Blessed are they that *lie*," I read aloud, unable to control the laughter which shook me. "That is the best thing I ever saw. Oh, Bavaji! you should have got your lesson up better for examination!"

The tiny Hindu hid his face in his hands and rushed out of the room; I heard his hysterical sobs in the distance. Madame Blavatsky sat with distorted features.

"So you think I taught him this!" she exclaimed at last; "you think me capable of such arrant folly! It is the spirit 'elementals' who are making fun of him, poor fellow! And what a vexation for me! My God! as though I could not have thought of something cleverer than that if I had wanted to deceive you! This is really too silly."

Declaration of Madame de Morsier :—

"Lorsque Bavadjée passa à Paris au mois de Septembre il me dit ceci à peu près : A vous on peut tout dire, je puis bien vous raconter que Madame Blavatsky, sachant qu'elle ne pouvait gagner M. Solovioff que par l'occultisme, lui promettait toujours de lui enseigner de nouveaux mystères à Wurtzbourg et même elle venait me demander à moi : 'Mais que puis-je lui dire encore ? Bavadjée, sauvez-moi, trouvez quelque chose, etc. Je ne sais plus qu' inventer.'

"E. DE MORSIER."

After this abortive phenomenon things marched faster, and I saw that I should soon be in a position to send Mr. Myers and the other persons concerned some very interesting additions to the report of the Psychical Society.

XIX.

BAVAJI's Russian writing, with its "blessed are they that lie," at once advanced matters. Madame Blavatsky was still suffering severely, but she was now able to walk about a little in her room. In spite of her illness, she was working double tides; she was finishing her article for the *Russky Vyestnik*, writing some fanciful stories, translating something, I do not remember what, for her *Theosophist*, and preparing to begin her *Secret Doctrine*. Sinnett was soon to come from England, and to him she meant to dictate a new "truth about her life".

Meanwhile, in her complete isolation, she was depressed, and could not do without me. I was bound, come what might, to make the most of the time, for as soon as her "non-Russian" friends arrived she would slip out of my hands.

Every day when I came to see her she used to try to do me a favour in the shape of some trifling "phenomenon," but she never succeeded. Thus, one day her famous "silver bell" was heard, when suddenly something fell beside her on the ground. I hurried to pick it up—and found in my hands a pretty little piece of silver, delicately worked and strangely shaped. Helena Petrovna changed countenance, and snatched the object from me. I coughed

significantly, smiled, and turned the conversation to indifferent matters.

Another time I said that I should like to have some of the real essence of roses made in India.

"I am so sorry," she said, "I have none with me. I do not like strong scents in general, and do not keep them. But I will not guarantee that you may not receive some essence of roses from India, such as you speak of, and that very soon."

Watching her from this moment, I distinctly saw her open one of the drawers of her table and take something out. Then some half-hour later, after having walked round me, she very gently and cautiously slipped some little object into my pocket. If I had not watched her every movement, and had not guessed why it was that she kept passing round me, I should probably not have noticed anything.

However, I immediately produced from my pocket a little flat flask, opened it, smelt, and said: "This is not essence of roses, Helena Petrovna, but oil of oranges; your 'master' has made a mistake".

"Eh, devil take it!" she exclaimed, unable to restrain herself.

At last came the decisive day and hour. I saw on my arrival that she was in a very gloomy and disturbed state of mind.

"What is the matter? You seem quite upset. Has anything happened?" I asked.

"I have had such annoying, horrible letters to-day. I had better not have read them!" she exclaimed, all livid, and with symptoms of the irritation which used to make her entirely lose her head and become

capable of any follies, for which she was afterwards, no doubt, often sorry.

"Where are the letters from? From London?"

"Yes, from London. Never mind from whom;—from false friends, from people to whom I have shown nothing but kindness, and who are ready to spit on me now, when I need all their support. Well, well, now it is the end of all things. Now I throw up the sponge! Then they won't be any the better for this. It is too bad, my friend, things like that. Trash—couldn't be worse."

"Well, things are going on like that," I said, "and here are you spending your time in child's play, and arranging your miserable phenomena for me."

Her eyes flashed at me, and she grumbled out: "Well, and you are always asking for phenomena".

"And then there is a letter from Russia!" she went on in a changed tone. "My dear X writes that she is coming here to see me in a few days."

"I am very glad to hear it," I said, and thought to myself: "Now there is no time to be lost, while she has no accomplices, and is still in this humour".

At this very moment a lucky chance came to help me.

Madame Blavatsky was talking about the *Theosophist*, and mentioned the name of Subba Rao, a Hindu who had attained the highest degree of knowledge.

"And then he has such a wise, wonderful face. Do you remember, I sent you some groups of theosophists with their names written below? I wonder if you ever cast your eyes on his face?"

"I don't remember."

"Well, wait a moment; look there, in the table; open the drawer and look,—I think there must be a photograph of him, with me, Damodar and Bavaji."

I opened the drawer, found the photograph, and handed it to her—together with a packet of Chinese envelopes such as I well knew; they were the same in which the "elect" used to receive the letters of the Mahatmas Morya and Koot Hoomi by "astral post".

"Look at that, Helena Petrovna! I should advise you to hide this packet of the 'master's' envelopes farther off. You are so terribly absent-minded and careless."

It is easy to imagine what this was to her. I looked at her, and was positively frightened; her face grew perfectly black. She tried in vain to speak; she could only writhe helplessly in her great arm-chair.

"Surely it is high time now to put an end to all this comedy," I went on. "I have been looking at you for a long time, and I am simply astonished. You, a clever woman, are treating me as if I were a baby. Do you really mean to say that you have not seen till this moment that even in Paris, after the phenomenon of the 'portrait in the locket,' I was convinced of the spuriousness of your phenomena? From that day my conviction could only grow instead of disappearing. I always fancied that I was studiously 'not concealing' my opinion from you. I have been waiting for you to put an end to this ridiculous game yourself, and begin to treat me seriously."

Helena Petrovna opened her eyes wide and gazed

at me with all her might. I had already pretty well prepared her to believe that I was a man who was fond of his laugh, and thought lightly of her "society," although personally liking herself. I well knew the part I had to play, and I knew no less well that it was only by playing this part that I should, at last, obtain to-day all for which I had so long been striving. "Madame's" piercing eyes did not trouble me; I smiled and gazed at her with a reproachful shake of the head.

"But then, if you are sure that I do nothing but take in all the world, you must despise me!" she exclaimed at last.

There was no help for it; she must think that I was capable of very "broad" views. I made up my mind at once.

"Why so?" I replied. "There is deceit and deceit, and there is trickery and trickery! To play the part you play, to make crowds follow you, to interest the learned, to found 'societies' in distant lands, to start an entire movement—good gracious! Why, it is all so out of the common, that I am enraptured at you against my will! In all my life I have never met so extraordinary a woman as you, and I am sure I shall never meet another. Yes, Helena Petrovna, I admire you, as a real, mighty, Herculean force, at work in times when it is but too rare to meet with anything but petty feebleness. Of course, there may be passing clouds, but I believe you will yet find a way to disperse them. There is a grand arena before you; you march through it like a gigantic elephant surrounded by your 'monkey theosophists,' Indian and European, playing their apish games about your feet. It is a

magnificent picture, and you simply hold me spell-bound."

"I have crossed the Rubicon!" I said to myself, and it was now my turn to look her through and through. Yes, she was indeed an elephant, but even an elephant can be taken captive if you know how to set about it. It was not for nothing that I had so long studied her; I knew her thoroughly, and saw that the moment was propitious, that she was in a suitable mood, and that I had struck the right note.

Her sombre, stupefied, almost terrified expression began suddenly to clear up. Her eyes blazed, she breathed with difficulty under overwhelming excitement.

"Yes," she suddenly exclaimed. "You have a very warm heart and a very cool head; it was not for nothing that we met! And there is the pity of it, that round the elephant, if I am an elephant indeed, there are none but apes. 'One man in the field does not make a soldier,' and now, in the midst of all these disasters that have befallen me, old and ill, I feel it but too well. Olcott is useful in his place; but he is generally such an ass, such a blockhead! How often he has let me in, how many blunders he has caused me, by his incurable stupidity! If you will only come to my aid, we will astonish the world between us, we shall have everything in our hands!"

I could hardly bear the strain, both of delight and repugnance. I had gained my end, but my part was an excessively difficult one. I could now only listen in silence. Fortunately she needed no words of mine. The barrier was broken, and, as was

always the case with her, she could not control herself.

She was in ecstasies. It was evident that in her fiery imagination there were suddenly springing up and ripening the most unexpected and daring combinations; she felt herself freed from the isolation which had so grievously weighed upon her.

In fact, since the time of the "treachery" of Madame Coulomb, and thanks to Olcott's absence, she had no companion to whom she could unbosom herself. Bavaji, an inferior creature, a mere subordinate tool, was not qualified either by position or culture to supply what she needed. And without a personal friend and companion with whom she could converse and consult frankly, indulging at the same time her passion for cynicism and ridicule, it was evidently impossible for her to live. She was terribly hungry after her intolerable fast, and simply glutted herself in complete self-forgetfulness.

"What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them, when in order to persuade them to let themselves be driven where you will, you must promise them and show them playthings? Why, suppose my books and the *Theosophist* had been a thousand times more interesting and more serious, do you imagine I should have had any sort of success anywhere, if behind all that there had not been the 'phenomena'? I should have done simply nothing. I should have long ago starved to death. They would have crushed me, and it would never have even occurred to any one to think that I too was a living creature, that I too must eat and drink. But I have long,

long since learnt to understand these dear people, and their stupidity sometimes affords me unbounded satisfaction. Why, you are 'not satisfied' with my phenomena, but do you know that almost invariably the more simple, the more silly and the more gross the 'phenomenon,' the more likely it is to succeed? I may tell you such stories about this some day as will split your sides with laughter, indeed they will. The vast majority of people who are reckoned clever by themselves and others are inconceivably silly. If you only knew how many lions and eagles in every quarter of the globe have turned into asses at my whistle, and obediently wagged their great ears in time as I piped the tune!"

"Still, you must have been caught sometimes," I said. "And with your astonishing carelessness and inattention I expect it must have happened pretty often."

"You are greatly mistaken!" she exclaimed with temper. "Yes, I certainly am careless and inattentive, but others, with very, very rare exceptions, are far more inattentive than I am; they are just so many sleepy owls, so many blind men, and never observe anything at all. Would you believe that all this time, before and after the Theosophical Society's foundation, I have not met more than two or three men who knew how to observe and see and remark what was going on around them? It is simply amazing! At least nine out of ten people are entirely devoid of the capacity of observation and of the power of remembering accurately what took place even a few hours before. How often it has happened that, under my direction and revision, minutes of various

occurrences and phenomena have been drawn up; lo, the most innocent and conscientious people, even sceptics, even those who actually suspected me, have signed *en toutes lettres* as witnesses at the foot of the minutes! And all the time I knew that what had happened was not in the least what was stated in the minutes. Yes, my dear sir, I venture to assure you that in history, even the best attested, there is far more fancy than truth."

"Perhaps; yet still you have been caught. You may be sure that I am not the only one who has such a cool head, as you put it."

"Well, what then? I was caught, and when I was caught I wriggled out, and it always ended in those who had found me out being left with empty hands."

"Are you alone the author of Koot Hoomi's letters, philosophical and otherwise?"

"No, the chelas used sometimes to help me, Damodar and Subba Rao and Mohini."

"And Sinnett?"

"Sinnett won't invent gunpowder; but he has a beautiful style, he is splendid at editing."

"And Olcott?"

"Olcott is not bad at editing either, when he understands what he is talking about. But one has always to chew everything for him till one is sick. But he knows how to make himself clear to the Hindus; he has a sort of way of influencing them, and they are always ready to follow him: one must do him that justice. And then he has very often helped me in phenomena, both over there and here. But he never can think of anything for himself. It is always

the same story with him: 'Sit there, do this, say that'. Don't you remember at Elberfeld? And the 'psychists' have acquitted him! There is an investigation for you! Ah, little father, it is worth laughing at—it is indeed!"

"Please let me see the magic bell."

She made a peculiar movement with her hand under her shawl, then she stretched out her arm and somewhere in the air there sounded the tones of the Æolian harp which had astonished every one. She again made a movement beneath her shawl, and in her hand with its supple-pointed fingers appeared the little piece of silver with which I was already acquainted.

"Yes, it is the magic bell," she boasted in her thoughtlessness. "A cunning little thing. That is my occult telegraph, through which I communicate with the 'master'."

I wished to take the little thing in my hand and examine its construction. But she stood up, held the clever little machine to my eyes, and suddenly put it into the drawer and turned the key.

"You shall know enough; you will soon grow older," she said: "all in good time; but now to the point. Save me, help me. Prepare the ground for me to work in Russia. I thought I should never go back to my own land; but now it is possible. Some people are doing all they can there, but you can do more than any one now. Write more, louder, about the Theosophical Society, rouse their interest. And 'create' Koot Hoomi's Russian letters. I will give you all the materials for them."

No doubt I was bound to expect something of the sort, and I did expect it. But I no longer had the strength to sustain my part; I seized my hat, and without a word I almost ran out into the fresh air.

XX.

As soon as I had got back to my room in Rügmer's Hotel, and had written out word for word all this amazing conversation, I grew calm, and in cold blood began to think over what had just happened. I soon came to the conclusion that on the one hand I had gained everything—on the other, almost nothing.

What I had from the first suspected, and had then convinced myself of, I now knew; I knew it on the word of Madame Blavatsky herself. She had made me a confession, such as, of course, she had never made to any but her own confederates. But who would believe that I had heard all this from herself, and in such circumstances? One must begin by knowing this woman as well as I knew her, before one could admit the possibility of such folly on her part.

No doubt if I had then had in my hands Hodgson's report, and other documents which saw the light of day independently of myself, and more or less showed the outrages on common-sense of which Madame Blavatsky was capable, I should have seen in them a sufficient confirmation for myself. But I was not yet acquainted with these documents.

I knew that, in spite of the odious and fatiguing hour through which I had passed, I had won nothing.

On the contrary, my position was worse. It is not particularly pleasant to know the truth, to have attained it by so painful a road, and then to have to keep it to oneself, or to hear it said: "But yet, my good sir, all this is sufficiently improbable and you have no legal evidence of the possibility of what you say". Why, a few of my friends will even say to me: "We believe you; but still you had better hold your tongue, till there is clear evidence that Madame Blavatsky is capable of making such admissions". And meanwhile, lacking strength to carry my part through to the end, I had deprived myself of the possibility of obtaining anything that would serve for such evidence as the case demanded. Madame Blavatsky would now infallibly try to cover up the traces of the folly she had committed, and endeavour to leave me, in her own words, "with empty hands".

What is the next thing to do? Why, to go away at once, and forget all about the matter. But then, in the first place, I could not start off at once, for I had unexpectedly found some business to do in Würzburg, and was obliged to spend there some two weeks more; and in the second, I was certain that Madame Blavatsky would, beyond all doubt, let me hear of her, and would not allow me to take leave of her on a footing like this. And then I longed to see what device this incredible woman could still invent.

I was still reflecting thus, when there was a knock at my door, and I saw before me the tiny, piteous figure of Bavaji.

"This is pretty quick," I thought to myself.

The Hindu's apish movements betrayed the great-

est perturbation. His great black eyes flashed, his blue lips trembled, and all his dark cinnamon-coloured face was twitching.

"Voici la lettre,—monsieur, lisez—Madame attend—" I heard his hoarse, repulsive voice and his halting French.

I opened the letter, and read:—

"I have just seen the master (twice underlined). He has commanded me to tell you something which will be a surprise to you and will decide perhaps not only your fate and mine, but perhaps, if you will only trust me for once (only the beauty of it is that it would have been even better for me and better for the cause if you had seen in me alone a *résumé* of all the so-called imaginary many masters), then you as a patriot would perform an immense service to Russia also. Come as soon as ever you can.

"H. B."

I read this through once, twice, thrice. She was so disturbed, so hurried, that she had actually written what, according to the sense of the Russian words, was perfectly shapeless. She must see me, come what may, and was afraid that I should disappear for ever after what had happened. She was trying to arouse my interest by every means in her power, and was clutching at Russia and patriotism to help the effect of her mystifications. But the "Master"! What could be her object in continuing to talk about the master now? In any case she gained her object; she puzzled me, and induced me to make up my mind to go to her—which, in my then mood, it was not hard for her to do. It would be curious in the highest degree to see her at this moment.

Ever since his "blessed are they that lie," Bavaji had kept himself hidden from me, and all Madame Blavatsky's cries and orders had not brought him into the study when I was there. One day I came upon him face to face; he made me a deep bow, turned away his head, and ran off. He had now evidently received orders not to dare to return without me under pain of death. It is likely enough that he had even been beaten, for it is doubtful if he would otherwise have ventured to show himself in my hotel. He would not look at me, he trembled all over, and said hoarsely and in an imploring voice: "Monsieur, —allons nous deux—Madame prie—Madame malade".

When he saw that I was going to start, he began to squeak oddly, burst out laughing, threw himself about, flew downstairs like an arrow, and dashed ahead with the joyful news.

What fresh thing will the wonderful "Madame" devise, when one would say that there was certainly no more devising possible?

I went to her room, and found her in her usual place, in her arm-chair at the table. Her face was terrible, all covered with dark red blotches. She was gasping, but trying with all her might to seem calm.

"Why did you run off so suddenly, little father?" she asked me at once with a not very successful smile; "what happened to you? You were here, and suddenly I look up and you are gone. But there, were you with me to-day? Perhaps it is only my fancy that I had seen you and talked to you?"

"No, Helena Petrovna, it was not your fancy. What was, was."

"Then, where did you take yourself off to?"

"Don't you see that I may very well admire you and be interested in you, I may, *malgré tout*, feel an involuntary liking for you, as my countrywoman, and one beyond the common; I may be heartily sorry for you, and wish you all sorts of good; but it does not follow that you have the right to propose that I should create Koot Hoomi letters. Such an employment is not in my way."

She gave me no time to finish, and cried: "What, I?—I made such a proposal? I never said anything of the sort to you!"

It struck me as absurd that I should never have guessed that this was what she would begin with; and that, in fact, being what I knew her to be, she could not possibly begin with anything else. But what would come next?

"Oh, you did not say so!" I said; "then it must have been some one else who offered me that honourable charge. But then there was no one here but you, we were alone."

She suddenly burst into real tears, clasped her head, and, with a very well feigned despair, tossed upon her chair.

"What a disaster," she cried; "again, again, that beast, that devil, that black wizard, the master's enemy and mine, has taken possession of me. He rendered me unconscious, and took possession of my body. He talked with my tongue, it seems, and I knew nothing of it."

"My God! she is going out of her mind, she has gone crazy," was the thought that flashed through my head.

Meanwhile her tears ceased, she calmed down somewhat, and continued:—

"Yes, you won't believe, of course; you will think it is all a story, a fresh impudent lie of my own inventing; but meanwhile I will tell you what happened to me some years ago in America. I was almost as old and ugly as I am now; but, you see, there are different kinds of ugliness in the world, and so a handsome young Armenian fell in love with me there. He suddenly appears in my house, and begins to treat me as only a husband would treat a wife. I order him off, but he does not go, declares that I am his wife, and that he has just been legally married to me, married before witnesses, Olcott among them. I turn to Olcott; imagine my horror when he confirms it. He was a witness at the wedding, and signed the register! So you may imagine how much money it cost me to get rid of this Armenian. That is what happens to me, and so it is now. Think what you will, I swear to you by all the saints that I remember nothing. You heard sounds coming from my mouth, but my judgment, my will and my consciousness were not there."

"No," I concluded, "she is not out of her mind, she is quite herself."

"Think of some tolerably plausible explanation," I said to her aloud.

She immediately thought of one.

"Why, of course," she said; "perhaps after all it was not our enemy, but the 'master' himself who talked like that; he simply wanted to expose you to a test."

"Well, that explanation is somewhat better than the other, but still it will not stand severe criticism," I remarked.

She suddenly changed her tone, and looked at me maliciously.

"Still—you have no right to be severe," she said slowly. "It will not do for you to be very severe; you see that, come what may, you have already deeply compromised yourself by giving the London 'psychists' an account of the 'master's' appearance to you. Whether reality, or dream, or even my hypnotic suggestion, still you saw it all the same, you wrote an account, and they have printed it over your signature. So it is too late now to go back, and your own self-love will not allow it. The part I am playing may be a poor one, and not do for you; but the only thing for you is to *faire bonne mine à mauvais jeu.*"

"I have long known that sooner or later you would talk to me like this," I answered; "but you must please understand that all this does not frighten me in the least. It is clear that you know me but little. I must beg you not to have recourse to a weapon like that with me."

"I am not frightening you at all," she cried; "but do just think a little. If you now begin suddenly to assert that you no longer believe in the existence of the 'master' and Koot Hoomi, you will meet with very, very great unpleasantnesses. Think it over; it is not a joke."

"I never have assured any one, whether by word or letter, that I believed unconditionally in the existence of your Mahatmas. As for unpleasantnesses,

can I avoid them anyhow, when I have been so closely acquainted with you?"

"Don't get angry and don't be sarcastic," interrupted "Madame" with another change of tone and a gracious smile. "It is all the same to me, I am only thinking about your peace of mind and welfare. Yes, after all, it is most likely that all that was a test," she continued, now quite calmed down; "an explanation like that, even if it is not good enough for you, will satisfy all the theosophists at any rate. All the more, because, as I told you, the 'master' has been with me and told me a great deal with reference to you. I will repeat you some of his words, about what is going to happen to you in the course of the next two months. I beseech you to wait only two months; and by then you must be convinced, in spite of everything, that the 'master' really does exist. Listen! this is what is going to happen to you."

And then, with unusual assurance, in the most precise detail, she proceeded to make a whole series of prophecies announcing to me most surprising events in my private life, which were to happen one after another in the course of not more than two months.

"There, please stop, Helena Petrovna," I said; "you really must take account of what you are doing. This is ridiculous; you are talking as confidently as a fortune-teller over her coffee grounds."

"I am speaking confidently," she said with dignity, "because I am speaking to you the 'master's' words, and he cannot err. You have been so patient with me, you have borne with me so long, you say that even now, *malgré tout*, you like me and are sorry for me. I beseech you to fulfil my last request. Have

patience for only two months, you understand; only two months. If in two months' time you are not convinced of the 'master's' existence and of the fulfilment of all his prophecies, then do what you will, print all you know. Only two months! I beseech you! Promise me."

She evidently wanted to gain time. She was calculating on all sorts of chances and coincidences, and most of all feared lest, at a moment when her affairs were in so bad a way, her rupture with me might get abroad through the Theosophical Society. But after all it made no difference; with the poor budget I possessed I could do but little. I could communicate nothing of real importance, no documentary evidence, that is, either to the London Society for Psychical Research or to the Paris theosophists.

My only hope was that in the course of two months something might turn up and my budget be enlarged.

"Well," I said, "I promise you to wait quietly for two months, but you must not imagine that you have raised in me the least shadow of a doubt."

"Oh, you may remain in doubt or free from doubt," she interrupted, "you will be terribly undeceived. All's well that ends well. The 'master' will know how to amaze you, to punish and to forgive. But you must write down his prophecies, and then, if you wish, I will not utter a word about him in your presence, till you yourself begin to speak of him."

"Yes, that I beg of you."

She was now quite calm, and wore the expression

of a conqueror. The long years of her extraordinary existence and manifold adventures had taught her to live for the present moment.

"But will you permit me to ask," I said, "what was the very important affair concerning Russia which you wished to communicate to me, and why did you appeal to my patriotism?"

She had probably already forgotten the contents of her note, at all events she had forgotten the part which the 'master' was to play in the matter. She said: "Well, this has nothing to do with the 'master'. I have been long wanting to talk to you about it; but I could not make up my mind;—but to-day I have made it up, and by so doing I shall show you my infinite confidence in you. Still, *malgré tout*, I look on you as a friend."

"Thank you for the honour," I said with a smile and a bow.

She either did not observe, or pretended not to observe, my tone of voice.

"Look here, this is what it is," she began; "you are soon going to St. Petersburg; now do undertake a very important business of the greatest benefit to Russia. I wish to propose myself as a secret agent of the Russian Government in India. To promote the triumph of my country over those vile English I am capable of anything. I hate the English Government in India, with its missionaries; they are all my personal enemies, thirsting for my destruction. That alone is reason enough why I should throw my whole soul into the struggle with them. And that I can do them immense harm in India is certain; and I alone can do it, no one else is capable of the task. My

influence on the Hindus is enormous; of that I can easily produce as much evidence as you will. At a sign from me, millions of Hindus would follow me. I can easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I will guarantee that in a year's time the whole of India would be in Russian hands. Only they must give me the pecuniary means—I don't want much. You know how I am in this respect. And they must put it in my power to penetrate into India through Russia, —for I can't go back there any other way, since this affair of the Coulombs and the missionaries—and I will bring about one of the greatest events in history. I proposed the same thing before, some years ago, when Timasheff was still minister; but I did not receive any answer. But now, now it is much easier for me; I can arrange the whole thing in a year. Help me in such a patriotic cause."

So this was what she had brought herself to think of. This was the revenge she planned for the English who had not appreciated her. There is not the least doubt that she was genuinely captivated by the plan, and believed it perfectly feasible.

"I cannot undertake any trouble myself in such a matter," I said; "but this is what I should advise, if you really want to bring about a great historical event, and if it is not a freak which you will have forgotten by to-morrow: put down clearly and circumstantially on paper what you have just told me, produce all the evidence of your influence over the Hindus, set out your plan of action, etc. Send this paper to Katkoff, with whom you have already been for a long time in correspondence. And then, await his answer. If you are afraid to send such a docu-

ment through the post, give it to me, and I promise that I will hand it over to Katkoff. That is all I can say and do for you."

She was very dissatisfied, and by the way she looked at me when I was saying that I would take charge of the documents themselves, and hand them over to Katkoff, I almost fancied that she might be afraid of trusting such a document to my hands in particular. However that might be, she never returned to the subject in conversation up to the time of my departure from Würzburg.

XXI.

Two or three days afterwards I saw Madame X who had come from Russia. She kissed me thrice, in Russian fashion, and expressed in choice phrases her delight on the occasion of our second meeting. I even spent two days in her company, thanks to a trip which we made to Nüremberg to see an exhibition of various curiosities. I have preserved some very queer and comic reminiscences of this trip. I fancy that my readers would not regret it if I decided to make them better acquainted with this very interesting personage, interesting in her external characteristics as well as for her inner qualities of heart and mind. Nor would it be tedious to relate the vengeance which I incurred from her for having, after investigation, withdrawn from my acquaintance with Helena Petrovna. But I have to deal with my relations with Madame Blavatsky and not with her family, and I shall not depart from the limits which I have set myself.

After Madame X there came to Würzburg Sinnett with his wife, and Mohini with Miss Arundale. I used to call at Madame Blavatsky's lodgings to talk to Madame X, and hear her tales about various sorts of devils and ghosts, and their tricks. I used to go for walks with her, leaving Miss Arundale with Mohini, and Sinnett with Madame Blavatsky. The

latter was now occupied several hours a day, dictating to this "first-rate editor" the very latest "truth about her life".

Miss Arundale soon went back to London, taking with her Bavaji as well as Mohini. I also was on the point of leaving Würzburg.

Before my departure I paid "Madame" a farewell visit. As I was taking leave, I said: "Now, Helena Petrovna, the hour of farewell has come; the final farewell this time. Listen to my honest advice, which comes alike from my head and my heart. Have pity on yourself; throw away all this horrible tinsel, resign the Theosophical Society, as you yourself wished to do not long ago, nurse your health in quiet, and write. You have a real literary talent; this can supply you with a livelihood and with satisfaction for your self-love. You work so easily, write; write in the Russian journals about all you have seen and learnt; but throw aside all this, all these Mahatmas and chelas, all these English and Hindus. Let the evening of your life, at least, be bright and calm. Do not take needless burdens on your soul; make a pause."

"Too late!" she said in a stifled voice; "for me there is no going back." And in a moment, in quite another tone, she went on: "Know that all the 'master's' predictions will be fulfilled, and in no more than a month and a half from now."

By these last words she made it possible for me to part from her without any feeling of pity.

I paid a short visit to Strassburg, and went on to Paris, in order to see my French friends before hurrying off to Russia.

I still received letters from Madame Blavatsky, first in Paris and afterwards in St. Petersburg. She would on no account admit that our relations had come to an end, and that I had said good-bye to her for ever. Besides, on thinking over all that had passed between us, she was bound to attempt to get letters of mine in reply, in order that, if anything happened, she might be able to say: "Excuse me, we are on the best of terms, we are in correspondence, here are his letters".

She used to rely on my pity for a sick old woman, and at last upon my "courtesy" How is it that I do not answer, when she thus complains of her sufferings, and appeals to my heart?

But I thought I had had enough, and that a correspondence with a lady who "had passed seven years in Thibet" could bring me neither profit nor satisfaction. I ceased to answer her letters.

She assumed a jocose tone, and lectured me on my silence: "You do not answer: God be with you. and I will write no more. Widow H. P. B."; or "Yours ever, *veuve* Blavatsky". I kept silence, but still she wrote.

At last the rain of letters ceased, and I even began to think that she had taken offence and become silent for ever. I was unspeakably glad of it; for at that very time, in St. Petersburg, it was my fortune to receive from several quarters, especially from Madame Y and her family (the honourable Madame Y was at that time on bad terms with Helena Petrovna), some very unexpected information. This information was very important for the picture

of the "foundress of the Theosophical Society," and for comparison with her own declarations, oral and printed, which she scattered abroad by means of Sinnett and Co.

Some two months more passed. By this time I had completed my budget by gaining trustworthy information about Madame Blavatsky, and I communicated the results of my inquiries to Mr. Myers and Charles Richet. I then returned to Paris, where I found Madame de Morsier quite ill and upset by a scandalous affair affecting a well-known theosophist.

She was now sufficiently prepared, and I told her all about my stay in Würzburg and about the information I had obtained in St. Petersburg.

"This only confirms what is, unhappily, but too clear to me already," she said, and she in turn told me the Paris news and showed me letters to herself from Madame Blavatsky, in which our "Madame" did not stand on ceremony, and revealed a very repulsive side of herself.

Some days later, to my greatest amazement, I received from Madame Blavatsky a fresh letter of many pages.

In this, among other things, she reported to me, in her own style, the contents of Hodgson's report, just published by the London Society for Psychical Research, and naturally considered that this report was worth nothing and that Hodgson had not proved anything.

XXII.

HAVING read Helena Petrovna's letter, I replied begging her to leave me in peace, to remain quiet, and not to run into the halter. I repeated the advice I had given her on leaving Würzburg. To this I received in answer a document which revealed her in her entirety, and before which even her Würzburg admissions paled. She headed it "My Confession"; and this is what I read in her missive :—

"I have made up my mind (doubly underlined). Has the following picture ever presented itself to your literary imagination? There is living in the forest a wild boar—an ugly creature, but doing no harm to any one so long as they leave him in peace in his forest, with his wild beast friends who love him. This boar never hurt any one in his life, but only grunted to himself as he ate the roots which were his own in the forest which sheltered him. There is let loose upon him, without rhyme or reason, a pack of ferocious hounds; men chase him from the wood, threaten to burn his native forest, and to leave him a wanderer, homeless, for any one to kill. He flies for a while, though he is no coward by nature, before these hounds; he tries to escape *for the sake of the forest*, lest they burn it down. But, lo! one after another the wild beasts who were once his friends join the hounds; they begin to chase him, yelping

and trying to bite and catch him, to make an end of him. Worn out, the boar sees that his forest is already set on fire and that he cannot save it nor himself. What is there for the boar to do? Why, this; he stops, he turns his face to the furious pack of hounds and beasts, and shows himself wholly (twice underlined) as he is, from top to bottom, and then falls upon his enemies in his turn, and kills as many of them as his strength serves till he falls dead —and then he is *really* powerless.

"Believe me, *I have fallen because I have made up my mind to fall*, or else to bring about a reaction by telling all God's truth about myself, *but without mercy on my enemies*. On this I am firmly resolved, and from this day I shall begin to prepare myself in order to be ready. I will fly no more. Together with this letter, or a few hours later, I shall myself be in Paris, and then on to London. A Frenchman is ready, and a well-known journalist too, delighted to set about the work and to write at my dictation something short, but strong, and what is most important—a true history of my life. *I shall not even attempt to defend*, to justify myself. In this book I shall simply say: In 1848, I, hating my husband, N. V. Blavatsky (it may have been wrong, but still such was the nature *God* gave me), left him, abandoned him—*a virgin* (I shall produce documents and letters proving this, although he himself is not such a swine as to deny it). I loved one man deeply, but still more I loved occult science, believing in magic, wizards, etc. I wandered with him here and there, in Asia, in America, and in Europe. I met with So-and-so. (You may call him a *wizard*, what does it

matter to him?) In 1858 I was in London; there came out some story about a child, not mine (there will follow medical evidence, from the faculty of Paris, and it is for this that I am going to Paris). One thing and another was said of me; that I was depraved, possessed with a devil, etc. I shall tell everything as I think fit, everything I did, for the twenty years and more that I laughed at the *qu'en dira-t-on*, and covered up all traces of what I was *really* occupied in, *i.e.*, the *sciences occultes*, for the sake of my family and relations who would at that time have cursed me. I will tell how from my eighteenth year I tried to get people to talk about me, and say about me that this man and that was my lover, and *hundreds* of them. I will tell too a great deal of which no one ever dreamed, and *I will prove it.* Then I will inform the world how suddenly my eyes were opened to all the horror of my *moral suicide;* how I was sent to America to try my psychological capabilities. How I collected a society there, and began to expiate my faults, and attempted to make men better and to sacrifice myself for their regeneration. *I will name all* the theosophists who were brought into the right way, drunkards and rakes, who became almost saints, especially in India, and those who enlisted as theosophists, and continued their former life, as though they were doing the work (and there are many of them) and *yet were the first* to join the pack of hounds that were hunting me down, and to bite me. I will describe many Russians, great and small—Madame S—— among them, *her* slander and how it turned out to be a lie and a calumny. I shall not spare myself, I swear I will

not spare; *I myself will set fire* to the four quarters of my native wood, the society to wit, and I will perish, but I will perish *with a huge following*. God grant I shall die, shall perish at once on publication; but if not, if the master would not allow it, how should I fear anything? Am I a criminal before the law? Have I killed any one, destroyed, defamed? I am an American foreigner, and I must not go back to Russia. From Blavatsky, if he is alive, what have I to fear? It is thirty-eight years since I parted from him, after that I passed three days and a half with him in Tiflis in 1863, and then we parted again. Or M——? I do not care a straw about that egoist and hypocrite! He betrayed me, destroyed me by telling *lies* to the medium Home, who has been disgracing me for ten years already, so much the worse for him. You understand, it is for the sake of the society I have valued my reputation these ten years. I *trembled* lest rumours, founded *on my own efforts* (a splendid case for the *psychologists*, for Richet and Co.) and magnified a hundred times, might throw discredit on the society while blackening me. I was ready to go on my knees to those who helped me to cast a veil over my past; to give my life and all my powers to those who helped me. But now? Will you, or Home the medium, or M——, or any one in the world, frighten me with threats when I have myself resolved on a full confession? Absurd! I tortured and killed myself with fear and terror that I should damage the society—kill it. But now I torture myself no more. I have thought it all out, coolly and sanely, I have risked all on a single card—*all*

(twice underlined)! I will snatch the weapon from my enemies' hands and write a book which will make a noise through all Europe and Asia, and bring in immense sums of money, to support my orphan niece, an innocent child, my brother's orphan. Even if all the filth, all the scandal and lies against me had been the holy truth, still I should have been no worse than hundreds of princesses, countesses, court ladies and royalties, than Queen Isabella herself, who have given themselves, even *sold* themselves to the entire male sex, from nobles *to coachmen and waiters inclusive;* what can they say of me worse than that? *And all this I myself will say and sign.*

"No! The devils will save me in this last great hour. You did not calculate on the cool determination of *despair*, which *was* and has *passed over*. To you I have never done any harm whatever, I never dreamt of it. If I am lost I am lost with every one. I will even take to lies, to the greatest of lies, which for that reason is the most likely of all to be believed. I will say and publish it in the *Times* and in all the papers, that the 'master' and 'Mahatma K. H.' are only the product of my own imagination: that I *invented* them, that the phenomena were all more or less *spiritualistic* apparitions, and I shall have twenty million *spiritists* in a body at my back. I will say that in certain instances I *fooled* people; I will expose dozens of *fools* (underlined twice), *des hallucinés;* I will say that I was making trial for my own satisfaction, for the sake of experiment. And to this I have been brought by *you* (underlined twice). You have been the last straw which has broken the camel's back under its intolerably heavy burden.

"Now you are at liberty to conceal nothing. Repeat to all Paris what you have ever heard or know about me. I have already written a letter to Sinnett *forbidding him* to publish my *memoirs* at his own discretion. I myself will publish them with all the truth. So there will be the '*truth* (underlined twice) about H. P. Blavatsky," in which psychology and *her own* and *others'* immorality and Rome and politics and all *her own* and *others'* filth once more will be set out to God's world. I shall conceal nothing. It will be a Saturnalia of the moral depravity of mankind, this *confession* of mine, a worthy epilogue of my stormy life. And it will be a treasure for science as well as for scandal: and it is all me, *me* (underlined twice); I will show myself with a *reality* (underlined twice), which will break many, and will resound through all the world. Let the psychist gentlemen, and whosoever will, set on foot a new inquiry. Mohini and all the rest, even *India*, are dead for me. I thirst for one thing only, that the world may know all the reality, all the *truth*, and learn the lesson. And then *death*, kindest of all.

"H. BLAVATSKY.

"You may print this letter if you will, even in Russia. It is all the same now."

After this "confession," I could, and can, speak at my ease of her verbal admissions to me at Würzburg, which were besides fully confirmed by the investigations of the London Psychical Society. These admissions are lost like a drop in the ocean in the midst of her precisely similar doings, established by documentary proof. Her confession is a

"human document," on which, in very truth, not only the artistic reader but the psychologist and the alienist may dwell with lively interest.

Of the numerous "truths" about the life of H. P. Blavatsky beginning with the "truth" according to Madame Jelihovsky and Sinnett, and ending with the latest "biographers" of "Madame," the confession sent to me, written in her own hand (as can be established by any expert) is indubitably the most interesting "truth". This "truth" is not a private letter, but one destined for the public as well, and containing the author's own permission to print. May be there is no less falsehood in it than in the works of Sinnett, Madame Jelihovsky, Olcott, Countess Wachtmeister, and similarly trustworthy biographers and witnesses. In it truth is artistically interwoven with falsehood, there are contradictions in every word, feverish imagination struggles with shameless cynicism, passions boil and fume, sudden sincerity, called forth by despair, by the seeming hopelessness of the situation, alternates with conscious, crafty calculation.

For a biography, a really truthful biography of "Madame," even this autograph "confession," written under the impulse of the moment, offers no adequately trustworthy material. But as a revelation of her character and moral qualities, as a full-length portrait of her, taken from nature, and taken not by an artist capable of completing and idealising, but by the sun itself, dispassionate and exact, this "confession" of hers is a priceless treasure. In it this deeply interesting and terrible woman is wholly reflected—the woman whom the inquirers of the London Society for Psychical Research have declared to be

"one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting impostors of our time".[1]

In my opinion, this judgment, far from being exaggerated, does not go far enough. Where in our time is there a similar impostress or a similar impostor? H. P. Blavatsky is unique; she surpasses the famous charlatan of the last century, Balzamo Cagliostro, inasmuch as when the "divine, mighty Copt" vanished mysteriously from the arena of life, there remained nothing but a memory of him behind; whereas after the death of H. P. Blavatsky, and the cremation of her sorely-tried, sinful body, there are left 60,000[2] members of the Theosophical Society, there remains a whole religious movement, with which, perhaps, it will some day be necessary to reckon seriously. When the London inquirers into psychical phenomena passed their judgment, they did not foresee the proportions which would be attained by the movement started by the "interesting Russian impostress".

Both I and Madame de Morsier, when we had read and sufficiently weighed the confession, saw very clearly that it was useless to expect the appearance of Madame Blavatsky in Paris and London. She was not likely to stir anywhere now. It is highly probable that the moment she had sent me the letter she was sorry for having done so, and in a couple of days had forgotten, if not the whole contents, at least a good half of it.

But she could not fail, when her mood altered, to

[1] [The words of the report (*Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, iii., 207) are "in history".—Tr.]

[2] [4000 would probably be nearer the mark.—Tr.]

make fresh attempts to improve her position. There flashed before her a hope that, after all, she still might convert me. This would be such a triumph now! She was thinking me as yet so tame in every way. And how could I betray her, my own countrywoman? Surely, she thought, there must be something wrong here; there was probably some one between us, telling tales about her.

She suddenly put on a virtuous mask, assumed the part of an injured innocent, and several days after her confession she wrote to me again, completing her portrait of herself, saying all she had left unsaid, and finally revealing herself.

"Great were my sins in the past, but not against you; it is not for *you* to punish me, before whom I am as guiltless as Christ before the Jews. I have never done you any harm, and may be I shall be useful to you." Then she wrote about Bavaji: "He is an obedient and clever boy! He is an obedient weapon in my hands! 'Je l'ai psychologisé,' you would say to Madame de Morsier. And only see what this obedient boy has done to me. He threw me over at the first shot of the Psychical Society. He is abusing me to the Gebhards worse than yourself. He says 'que j'ai commis un sacrilège, déshonoré le nom des Maitres, que j'ai avili la science sacrée en la donnant aux Européens'. He is going against you, Sinnett, me, every one, and devil knows what they will do together (with Mohini?) in London —now that he is going, and perhaps has gone, there. He is a very *dangerous* enemy, because he is a fanatic, and he is capable of raising all India against me."

And again: "What have I done to *you* (underlined

twice)? What have I said? What have you learnt? Do not do like the Psychical Society or Madame de Morsier, who fancied that I knew everything, that I *must know* everything, and therefore betrayed me. *Beware* (underlined twice)! You are surrounded by *such a ring* that all your cool head will not help you. I only beg you to answer me this riddle—What can *you* have against me? Did I ever want to bite you? Do I wish you ill? If I wrote to you that I am in despair, then I wrote only what I feel. It was your friendship I valued, not your presence or your membership of the society. I wrote that I would be the first to upset all the continental societies, the Parisian and the German, where (excepting the Gebhards and poor Hübbe-Schleiden) all are men of straw and enemies, and I am ready to do it after I have put in print all their meannesses. But only think what *you* would have thought of *me* if we had changed places. Even if I were going to be hanged I would not betray you, and I would betray no one else, even if I knew that it was *true*, but would keep silence. And what have I done to you? I am ready to forget all to-morrow and to love you as of old, because I have no spite in me, and because *you are a Russian*—a *sacred thing* for an *exile* like me. Farewell.

"H. B."

I am convinced that she honestly did not understand why I had parted from her and appeared among the number of her accusers. Her moral notions were so radically perverted that she had lost all grasp of certain ideas. She imagined that everything in the world was founded on personal relations,

and that to this there was no exception. "What have I done to you—you?" "Others," that is to say, "I may cheat and ruin; I may mar all their lives, I may abandon myself to every sacrilege, and huckster the greatest truths, but if I like you personally, and cannot take you in because you have seen through me, if it may yet be in my power to serve you in one way or another, then why do you betray me, and that to foreigners?" That is what she insinuated.

"Return to me, and all will be forgotten"—of course! And she was thinking to herself: "Once come back to me, and I will see that there shall be only one way of escape from me,—a ball in your brain. And even now, beware! for you are surrounded by such a magic circle that all your cool head will not help you."

She could not control herself, and admitted into her letter these words, which, as I was soon to know but too well, were no empty threat. She was already preparing to collect her army, and avenge herself upon me in a very "theosophical" fashion.

XXIII.

THUS ended all my immediate relations with Madame Blavatsky. I did not reply to her last letter, I was not enticed by the prospect that "the past should be forgotten," I did not return to her friendly embrace. I was not alarmed by her threats, I did not feel myself fettered in the magnetic ring of her "theosophical" vengeance, and was generally like the little bird of which the song speaks:—

> Gaily hops the little bird
> Down the path of sorrow,
> Troubled not by any word
> Of what may come to-morrow.

Everything was now perfectly clear. There was no need to wait for any further revelations, and nothing could now weaken the facts which had become known to me. I had already told Madame Blavatsky in the autumn of 1884, at Elberfeld, that I did not wish to remain on the list of the members of the Theosophical Society, as I had observed that the actions of some of the members, beginning with Olcott, were not consistent with the fundamental rules of the constitution. But Helena Petrovna, who was very ill at the time, began to "beseech" me not to resign officially, nor to cause her such an annoyance and scandal.

"Let me go and die," she said in her favourite jargon, "then you can do what you like; but so long as I am not off the hooks, even though I am lying like a log, don't put me to shame and don't give food for all sorts of talk; think how my enemies will rejoice: 'There, you see, she could not even keep her own fellow-countryman, he is off!' Even if you do dislike any one, Olcott, or any of the rest, just spit on them and don't make me responsible for one and all; have pity on a sick old woman."

Leaving pity aside, I clearly saw that my official retirement from the society would offend "Madame" in the highest degree; her friendship for me would not survive it, and I should get positively nothing out of her and learn no more. The rest of the theosophists would begin to shun me, and there would be an end to any further relations with them. In view of this I determined to wait for the time when my doubts and suspicions should be changed into evident facts. The "Widow Blavatsky's" last letters to me were more than sufficient facts, and accordingly, on 16th February, 1886, a few days after the receipt of the "confession," I despatched to Adyar in India, to the address of the secretary of the Theosophical Society, Mr. Oakley, with whom I was slightly acquainted, a registered letter with my formal resignation.

When I had addressed this letter, I felt like a man who has had a bath after a journey in a close and dirty railway carriage. I wrote a concise account of my acquaintance with H. P. Blavatsky and of the Würzburg conversations, and then translated into French extracts from her last letters to me, and

her "confession". In view of any eventuality, and with the object of giving my translation a documentary character, I had recourse to my honoured old friend Jules Baissac, the well-known scholar and linguist, who besides filled the office of "sworn translator to the Paris Court of Appeal".

Jules Baissac, as has already been mentioned at the beginning of this narrative, in his character as a student of the history of religion, had been greatly interested in the Theosophical Society and its foundress, to whom he had been introduced by Madame de Morsier. He had several serious conversations with H. P Blavatsky, Olcott, and Mohini, he had learnt from their mouths everything bearing on his studies, he had made acquaintance with the writings of Madame Blavatsky and Sinnett, and regarded the Theosophical Society as the most curious phenomenon of contemporary religious life. He had written a lengthy and circumstantial article entitled "La Nouvelle Théosophie," and published it in the periodical *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*. The article was by no means a propaganda of theosophy, but an account of what was known to the author from the statements of the foundress and the active members of the society.

Still, in spite of the sober tone of the "report," one could see in it a man who had been "touched to the quick," and was unconsciously almost befogged by the witchcraft of "Madame" and her champions. It is highly probable that, under favourable circumstances, the fog would have grown denser, and that Jules Baissac's pen would have rendered no slight services to the cause of the New Theosophy. But

the action of the London Society for Psychical Research and Hodgson's report cooled the veteran scholar down at once.

When I saw him again, he had the air of a man who had been saved from a great peril. He listened to my story with the greatest interest, and relished Madame Blavatsky's letters in a way which convinced me of his thorough knowledge of the Russian language.

But for me the serious question was whether he had the right, in his character of sworn translator, to certify officially the translations from the Russian documents. It appeared that he had the right, and I at once obtained his kind consent. We examined my translations together, phrase by phrase, word by word, stop by stop. He then attested them all, by his own signature, and attached the official seal, as sworn interpreter, both to the translations and to the Russian originals from which they had been made.

A meeting of all the effective Paris theosophists was called at Madame de Morsier's. When all had appeared at the muster, the reading of my account and of Madame Blavatsky's letters was begun. The majority of those present were already prepared for what awaited them; but none the less Helena Petrovna's amazing confession, and Madame de Morsier's documentary communication about another matter, wherein the foundress of the Theosophical Society also appeared in an unexpected light, produced an overwhelming effect.

The French branch of the Indian parent society, founded by the Duchesse de Pomar under the title of the *Société d'Orient et d'Occident*, was broken up

by the retirement of almost all its members, with the soul of the branch and its principal secretary, Madame de Morsier, at their head. The resignations were immediately drawn up and signed for transmission to Mr. Oakley at Adyar in India.

There now appeared on our Parisian horizon a personal friend of Helena Petrovna, compromised and indignant. This was Gebhard, senior, from Elberfeld. "Madame" had summoned him to Würzburg, and, one may imagine after what explanations and scenes, had entrusted him with a very honourable mission: he was to persuade me to hold my tongue and withdraw all my evidence, and moreover to sow dissension between me and Madame de Morsier, as enjoined by the rule *divide et impera.* It was decided to act on me by means of threats, while Madame de Morsier, being bewitched by me, was to be turned into the way of truth by flattery.

But the fact was that our latest moves were still unknown in Würzburg, and Helena Petrovna told him nothing of her confession and the subsequent letter, evidently not understanding their importance.

Herr Gebhard appeared with the greatest *aplomb;* but when Madame de Morsier, in my presence, read him my account and the translations of the letters, he cut a very poor figure. He was evidently unprepared for anything of the sort, and lost his head; lost it to such an extent that he could not utter a single word, and hurried away from Paris in order to think over the position in consultation and to prepare himself quietly for the execution of the task imposed upon him. He was prepared for it, as will soon be seen, in the course of a few months.

XXIV.

I WAS to experience in my own person the means to which "Madame" and her intimates had recourse in order to get rid of a dangerous man, to disarm him and force him to silence. My excursions into the region of the occult, which had led me to interest myself in Madame Blavatsky, my desire to unriddle this wonderful woman and to expose her to those whom I regretted to see deceived by her, all this cost me very dear. I was to undergo the secret theosophical vengeance, and am now compelled to make up my mind to speak of it, because I see that without setting out some facts, at all events, and their documentary confirmation, my story will be very imperfect, as well as my picture of Madame Blavatsky and her staff.

In an attack of fury and despair Madame Blavatsky, simultaneously with the despatch of the "confession" to me in Paris, wrote to Madame X in Russia to say that I was an "enemy," and a dangerous enemy, for I evidently knew a great deal, and had learnt much of it, in all probability, from Madame Y, who, having fallen out with Madame Blavatsky, had betrayed her to me. Madame X on receiving this letter turned into a fury, and wrote to Madame Y, who, in the character of a *friend*, hastened to give me warning of everything from St. Petersburg.

"For God's sake write to them" (Mesdames Blavatsky and X), she besought me, "that I had no reason to 'betray Helena to you,' to use X's expression, or to murder her, as she writes herself; for her past is perfectly well known to the large majority of people (several persons are named), and I don't myself know to whom. You cannot imagine to what they expose me, by picking me out as the scapegoat, responsible for everything, a sort of telegraph wire for the transmission of all kinds of abominations. Still the unhappy, crazy Helena is not the one to do that; she is to be pitied. But X is malice and calumny personified."

Later on Madame Y informed me that they were collecting over there the addresses of some close connexions of mine; for what purpose she did not know. From these words I was to understand that the good ladies were starting their vengeance in a very simple way, by means of anonymous letters addressed to my near connexions, in order, somehow or other, to calumniate or estrange me, on the principle "calomniez, calomniez—il en restera toujours quelque chose".

A few days after I received another short letter from Madame Y; but this time it contained nothing definite, only the exclamation: "Yes! X is a hundred thousand times more malicious and more guilty than Helena."

From this phrase I could only conclude that the quarrel between Madame Blavatsky and Madame Y was, to all appearance, coming to an end. Evidently "Madame" had made up her mind that the best way to influence me was through Madame Y.

For this reason she wrote her a tender sisterly letter, and convinced her that she was a thousand times less guilty than Madame X; so now the attack upon me could proceed from this side as well.

I wrote to her begging her not to be uneasy, not to mix herself up in the matter, and to tell me nothing of the ladies and their friends. I reminded her that she had been the first to open my eyes to Helena Petrovna and her Theosophical Society, and that the point at issue was not Helena Petrovna's past, but her present deceits. Once I had convinced myself of these deceits, I could no longer hold my peace, and told out aloud all I knew. Accordingly the thing was done, and I anticipated nothing fresh. I was persecuting no one, I wished to think no more of "Madame" and her society. If they would not leave me in peace, then let them do what they would; what had I to do with it? I had done my work and retired, and did not see what they wanted of me, now that all was finished.

All this quarrel, diverting me from more interesting and more useful occupations, became at last so vexatious to me that I hastened into a quite different atmosphere in the complete quiet of the ancient Breton town of Dinan, on the sea-shore, close to where there rises one of the wonders of the world; the famous Mont St. Michel. My request, addressed to Madame Y and her family, was apparently fulfilled; none of them transmitted me any further gossip about Blavatsky and Co.

But I was not permitted entirely to forget her; Mr. Myers came to Dinan to meet me and to receive from me various information, and I was obliged once

more to unroll all my budget before him. At last, at the end of April, the attack was recommenced from St. Petersburg. I received a letter from one of the members of Madame Y's family, in which, "from great friendship to myself," I was warned that my affairs were in a bad way; the honourable Helena Petrovna demanded (there follow extracts from her letter) "that I should withdraw what I had said about the phenomena which I had seen, and give no account of her to any one"; if I did not fulfil this demand, "then she would not hesitate as to the course she would take, as she had nothing to lose; that she would publish about me whatever she would, and how she would, for she must defend herself".

Next day came a letter from Madame Y herself; a wonderful letter, full of friendly anxiety on my account. "Listen to my warm and sincere prayer; withdraw from everything that concerns Helena. Let it fall on her, if such a punishment is destined for her; but not through you—have pity on me. I should be sorry that among all our good relations there should come the black vision of her last grievous sufferings, never mind how well-deserved they may be. She has one folly; that idea of virginity has stirred up all this mud. Let the dead, who have nothing to lose, bury their dead. But you are living. Helena is dead; what has she to lose? She has long ago burnt her boats. I pity her for the sufferings of the last years of her life, wedded to her severe illness; but you see that morally she has nothing to lose. A lawsuit the more, or an accusing article the more, have no such alarming consequences for her as they have for those whose future

is before them. How would you like various humorous journalists of London and Paris to bring reports to St. Petersburg, to the delight of your enemies and the damage of your future career? I hear that Myers has been with you, and that the affair is again kindled and spreading by your instrumentality. It is impossible to wait longer, and I tell you, be on your guard, or you will bitterly repent!"

Some days after Madame Y again wrote to me among other things: "Yes; you have put the fat in the fire; I hope to God you may get well out of it. You were terribly wrong in thinking that Helena was so defenceless that it was easy to frighten and vanquish her; you have made an enemy of her by your own acts, without any need; for she has nothing to lose and nothing to fear. I cannot and will not name any one, but I hope that you must believe me; a day does not pass that you are not attacked by letters and rumours reflecting on you. Withdraw your evidence; declare that you do not wish either in word or deed to mix yourself up in the troubles of the theosophists. I do not even know what you are preparing for yourself here. If you are really starting to come, start at once. I cannot refuse Helena her wish to say good-bye to me; I shall go and do all in my power to put an end to her hostile action towards you; but concessions on your side are indispensable. It is difficult to write everything; we must meet. I will try to put off my journey, in order to have a talk with you."

At that time I had as yet no reason to doubt Madame Y's sympathy for me, and I explained to myself her strange prayer that I should withdraw

my evidence, solely by the fact that, incited and unsettled by the letters of Madame Blavatsky and Madame X, she was simply unable to take account of her words. I therefore wrote to her, again repeating that I did not anticipate anything at all, and had entirely retired from anything to do with "theosophising". As for concealing what I knew from persons who were interested in the question, I had no moral right to do so. I had in my own belief done my duty, and to beg me to withdraw my evidence, and to frighten me by disseminating all sorts of gossip and calumny about me, was most unseemly. I regretted that Madame Y did not appreciate the substance of her request, and thought that the very best thing for her would be to retire likewise from the matter and to leave me in peace on all this head.

In answer I received a new variation on the same tune: "On receiving your letter of yesterday I was convinced that mine which follows would not be taken in a spirit of meekness, as you are satisfied that you are doing nothing to Helena's detriment. But how am I to act, how can I not warn you, when I am continually receiving letters from Paris, from Germany, from England (not from Helena, but from persons unconnected with her), in which they say that you, you by name, are guilty of all Helena's discredit and misfortunes? So I beg you in God's name to leave X entirely on one side, and not to say a word about her at any time. I know how many powerful and influential backers they have, who will all set upon you for the virtue and honour of X. Come at once."

I was then just on the eve of my final return to

Russia. A few days later, at the end of May, in St. Petersburg, I saw Madame Y just on the point of starting for Elberfeld to "say good-bye" to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky.

"I assure you," I said to her, "that Helena Petrovna has not the least intention of dying, and only writes to you in order that you, for the sake of your family feelings and her illness, may give the theosophists some 'crushing' evidence about me. The fact is, you are already under her influence, and at her dictation you beg me in your own name to do what is utterly impossible for me,—to take back my evidence, and to proclaim myself a liar and slanderer."

"I am going solely in order to clear you in this matter, to free you from all their lying accusations, and to declare the truth," she asserted warmly.

"I do not know how to thank you, but the affair has reached a point at which this is an insoluble problem. Helena Petrovna does not want the truth at all, especially in present circumstances; she will not thank you for the truth, and you will appear before her only as an ingrate. You will be brought into an inextricable position, having on one side the truth and the impossibility of calumniating me; on the other Helena Petrovna, her objects, her sickness, and family feeling. The matter is very serious, and I advise you to take pity on yourself and not to go."

But it was evident that she was much interested in this foreign journey, especially as she wished to give a treat to one of her daughters, whom Madame Blavatsky with great foresight had also invited to the hospitable house of Gebhard.

"I know that I am not going to any happiness," exclaimed Madame Y. "But I cannot help going, for it is only by a personal interview with Helena that it is possible to settle this matter; you yourself will thank me; I shall show you my friendship in act. But for God's sake be more prudent. You are always soaring somewhere in the sky, and will not understand realities; I am much older than you, and have seen all sorts of things in my time; believe me that you are bringing yourself into a terrible position, and I tremble for you."

"Pardon me," I objected, "one would think I had been guilty of some crime or disgraceful conduct, for which I must tremble and quake before the revenge of Madame Blavatsky and X."

"Oh dear, oh dear!"—Madame Y clasped her hands —"on what planet do you live? Can't you understand that it is not in the least necessary to be a criminal or a scapegrace to have your reputation damaged and all your life poisoned? 'The good report lies down, the bad one runs!' the saying is too true. They have already organised a whole campaign against you over there. Helena has friends, and X has a great many—and highly respected ones. And you may be sure that all these respectable people, though knowing nothing, will, first on the word of Helena and X, and then on one another's word, begin to repeat the most revolting scandal about you, and to pervert and distort the facts of your personal intimate life. And this alone will damage your future. You see, nobody will say anything to your face, and you will suspect nothing; but a little time will pass, and they will be covering

you with mud, bespattering you with hog-wash, and no one will stand up for you, because every one is more prone to believe ill than good, and any fact, by care, can be set in whatever light is desired. One single malignant, unprincipled and guilty slanderer such as X is quite enough to poison your life for ever. The more unprincipled the slanderer, the more surely the slander gains its end. The worst of it is that you will not know anything, and will struggle like a fish on ice, not understanding why people are turning their backs on you, and, far from taking your part in the difficulties of life, actually doing you harm. If you had been a solitary man, and well provided for, you could have said to yourself, 'It is all the same,' and there would have been an end of it. But as it is you are not such, you cannot do without other people. Can it be that all these A B C truths are unknown to you?"

"Unhappily they are not," I answered, "and you have succeeded in thoroughly disturbing and distressing me. Yes, it may certainly be that all these terrors really await me. But what can I do? In an unlucky moment I came into collision with your Helena Petrovna; but once this misfortune came upon me, all the rest has followed inevitably, step by step."

"Why did you not fly from this fatal woman in Paris in 1884, when I warned you? Did I not tell you that with her you could only come to trouble?" Madame Y interrupted.

"Just so; but I could not rest on the assurance of your words; she herself, her society, the whole movement started by her, the character of the move-

ment itself, impelled me to convince myself, to ascertain everything personally. It is only now that I know, when I have convinced myself of everything with my own eyes and ears,—it is only now that, having learnt all about the phenomenon, I can deal with it calmly and openly."

"I do not understand you, and never shall," said Madame Y with irritation; "you might have found out and held your tongue instead of falling into the snare. However, show me Helena's letters which compromise her so deeply; I must read them myself to see what the matter is, and to have the right to say that I have seen them myself, with my own eyes."

I handed her the letters with which the reader is already acquainted. She read them and sat all livid.

"Why, she is out of her mind!" she exclaimed at last; "please give me these letters to take away; I will keep them as the apple of my eye, and return them to you when I come back from Elberfeld."

"What you ask is entirely impossible," I said; "these letters must remain with me. You have seen them and read them, you know that they are in her own hand. If there is any need of the translation which was made by me in Paris and was certified and witnessed by Baissac, the sworn interpreter of the Paris Court of Appeal, I have left it with Madame de Morsier, as well as copies of the originals. The matter is all in order, and any one can compare the letters and the translation as much as he will."

"What then am I to take with me? What is your last word? Can it be that, now you see how

much harm they can do you, you will not consent to any sort of concession by which I may be able to disarm them? Beware and do be prudent even now."

"This is my last word. I certainly do not mean to withdraw my evidence, which I have written out and left with Madame de Morsier. As for Helena Petrovna's past, what was told me in the main by yourself, and told me not as a secret but as a matter of general knowledge, all this I have communicated to my intimate circle in Paris. I was bound to do this, in consideration of the fancied 'virginity,' on which Madame Blavatsky based her position in the Theosophical Society. But we determined there that if it came to a wider dissemination of the revelations which have been made, we would leave on one side her past as far as she herself has left it on one side in her 'confession'. In any case she is accused, and will be accused, not for her past, but for her theosophical deceptions. I shall henceforth stand entirely on one side."

"But do you mean to write and publish against her, here in Russia?" interrupted Madame Y.

"In Russia very little is known about the Theosophical Society and its foundress, and the very best thing is not to talk about it at all. I promise you that so long as there does not appear in the Russian press any false information about the Theosophical Society and Helena Petrovna, I shall say nothing. If people begin to talk about all this, and to talk falsely, I shall consider it my plain duty to assert the truth in print, and to say what I know. That is my last word."

Madame Y remained greatly dissatisfied with my obstinacy, and left for Elberfeld.

Ten days later there was fired at me a double shot, aimed by the hand of Helena Petrovna; in other words, two letters inspired by her, and passed, in all probability, through her censorship. I could not but be convinced, from these two letters, that the travellers, as was easy to foresee, had entirely fallen into "Madame's" toils, and were doing their very best to sit on two stools at once.

Madame Y begged me, among other things, to send the attested copy of the "confession," etc., and at the same time declared that she was going to Paris to compare the letters. Later on again she tried to persuade me—calling on God to witness the sincerity of her intentions—to make the concessions asked of me "while it was yet possible to stop the scandal without publicity". "Do not go to extremities, do not drive her (Madame Blavatsky) into the law courts, and oblige her to summon you, Madame de Morsier, and others on a charge of defamation. She has plenty of devoted and, what is more, very rich friends, who will not be ruined by a lawsuit, and are begging her to begin one. She has no fear of publicity. Letters from Paris have finally convinced me that the Parisians are only awaiting an opportunity for bringing you into court *en diffamation*. And if it comes to this, shall you feel better for a scandal in the papers? For God's sake do not affront me; don't think that I am terrorising you. I am not terrorising, I am pitying you. I am deeply sorry for you, and wish you well."

As Madame Y knew perfectly well, from my own

words, that all the documents were in Paris, with Madame de Morsier, and as she was going there, it was no use for me to send her the copies. As the whole of her "terrorism" was a falsehood, and one besides which I had already experienced, I was justified in sending no answer to her letter. I could easily imagine how "Madame" was boiling over, and taking refuge in her favourite device, with which the reader is already acquainted, the menace of a legal action set on foot by the aid of rich and influential friends.

Her friends, people that is who in one way or another were compromised in various "theosophical" abominations and deceptions, might certainly well be anxious to humiliate their detectors; they had even begun to try already, as the reader may easily conceive. To do this it is likely enough that they were prepared to sacrifice no small amount of money. But still neither the London Society for Psychical Research, nor I, nor Madame de Morsier had any cause for uneasiness; it was impossible to cite all of us, her accusers, without at the same time finally ruining Madame Blavatsky and her society. The theosophists could hurt us only by secret, underground means, by calumnies unconnected with phenomena and Mahatmas. As for the phrase about "letters from Paris convincingly showing that the Parisians are only awaiting," etc., this was the fault of a very absurd fancy which Madame Y had got into her head, for there was positively on one who could write such letters then, with the exception of * * * * and the sick fanatic D * * *.

Yes, I clearly imagined all the scene at Elberfeld,

all the *faits et gestes* of the Gebhards, of Madame Blavatsky and their guests; but still my clairvoyance was very imperfect. Things of more interest were going on there, the occult centre whereof was formed by my unfortunate self.

Helena Petrovna assured Gebhard that, in view of my final departure from Paris for Russia (of which she knew from Madame Y), now was the favourable moment for setting Madame de Morsier against me, and thus turning this lady, so useful, and indeed indispensable, to the theosophical cause, and her numerous friends into the way of truth.

Gebhard, incited by "Madame," wrote on 5th May, 1886, a circumstantial letter to Madame de Morsier. He explained why it was that, after reading my documents in her house in Paris, he had vanished, and from that time had given no sign of existence. This was all caused by domestic troubles in which he had been absorbed, and not at all because he admitted Madame Blavatsky's guilt. He then asserted that my translation was inaccurate and that Madame Blavatsky loudly maintained this. He further, as though by the way, and very clumsily, maligned me, attacking my private life on Madame Blavatsky's authority, and perverting facts till they were unrecognisable; he even hinted very transparently that I had been telling about her, Madame de Morsier, my true and honoured friend, tales of the most unseemly sort, tales the scandalous dissemination of which no honourable woman could pardon.

As Madame de Morsier knew that in translations of mine attested by her old friend Baissac there could be no blunders, and that they were made from genuine

and not from spurious originals; as the calumny with regard to my private life was before her eyes, and as no one could by any possibility prove to her that I was capable of telling unseemly stories about her, this amiable epistle produced no effect.

At last they made up their minds that the best thing was to give it out that I was insane!

And therefore the demand was made upon me, and Madame de Morsier was charged to communicate it to me, that I should immediately send to Elberfeld a formal letter in which I should declare that all my revelations about "Madame" were falsehood and calumnies on my part against her, and that I withdrew them all! If I did not comply with this order, such a public scandal would in one way or another be immediately set going as would destroy me and my family.

In conclusion Gebhard advised Madame de Morsier not to show any one the "documents in the Blavatsky affair" (*le dossier* Blavatsky), as her principal accuser was a madman. Madame de Morsier replied to Gebhard, refusing to listen to these calumnies, and writing in a tone which did not invite reply. But H. P. Blavatsky could not rest, and the obedient Gebhard again sat down at his desk and wrote. Moreover he considered himself the aggrieved and injured party; he was excited, and wanted to sting and say some caustic things; so one can pardon alike the notable foolishness of his letter and its blunders in French grammar.

It need not be said that Gebhard's rubbish produced no reply from Madame de Morsier. Nor could he fulfil his intention of keeping her posted up

in the course of events, as there was simply no course of events at all. Helena Petrovna and Co. were convinced that their game was up, that Madame de Morsier was immovable, and that they could not succeed in frightening either her or me. Some months afterwards I learnt that Gebhard himself was disenchanted of H. P. Blavatsky. This, at least, is what he wrote to Madame de Morsier, on the occasion of a certain libel which was put in print by Madame Blavatsky: "La seule chose qui me surprend, c'est que connaissant si intimement le caractaire tartare ou kalmouk de H. P. B. vous puissiez encore être étonné de n'importe ce qu'elle écrive". He proves that it is not worth while on this occasion to "relever vivement des diffamations qui ne méritent pas l'honneur d'une réponse". Further on he says, "Je blame fortement la manière peu comme il faut de H. P. B." and again repeats that the "fausse accusation" on Madame Blavatsky's part does not deserve any attention. And is not this a complete disenchantment? especially when it is remembered that not so long before, this very Gebhard was aiding Madame Blavatsky not only with his pen and his advice, but with pecuniary means as well. The originals of these curious letters, from which I have given extracts, were placed entirely at my disposition by Madame de Morsier.

This was the last news I received of Madame Blavatsky. I have lived in St. Petersburg, and from that day to this it is only by report that I have heard anything about the Theosophical Society. With Madame Y, since her battles at Elberfeld "for the

truth and for me," I have of course broken off all relations.

From time to time it has been my fate to discover traces of the "occult theosophical vengeance" which has not left me at peace. I have lighted upon wonderful calumnies and slanders, and on tracing them to their sources I have almost always found the trail either of Madame X or of Madame Y or of some other of Madame Blavatsky's friends. What are the actual dimensions of the damage done me by this vengeance, I do not know.

XXV.

WITH the aid of herself and of her nearest friends, I have sketched the portrait of H. P. Blavatsky. I have been obliged, willy-nilly, to dwell on its most striking lines and to uncover the many moral ulcers of this phenomenal woman. If I intended to follow hour by hour my whole acquaintance with her, and to reproduce all her words and acts, all the small yet always more or less characteristic facts of which I was a witness, I should have to write a huge book. I have been obliged to confine myself to matters which in one way or another were prominent.

I am now mentally reviewing everything, in all the minutest details, in order to find something which may justify her adorers' and supporters' marvellous tales about her; something which might have been to me, when all was said and done, a proof of the reality of her higher knowledge, in the way of "phenomena". And I can find nothing whatever of the sort. And how anxious she was all the time to startle me with something! This was a right calculation on her part.

There is, it is true, one thing which I cannot explain: how she produced and stopped at will the various raps which were heard at a great distance

all round [1] her, and also the strange sounds like the ticking of a small electrical machine, of which I have spoken in their proper place. But with this manifestation is exhausted everything in her phenomena which I am unable to explain. I am acquainted with the pretty piece of silver which played so important a part with its melodious notes, whereby the "master" informed his "elect" of his presence.

That "Madame's" soft hands, with their supple pointed fingers, were very clever in the execution of rapid movements, I have many times perceived. She had probably taken lessons in conjuring from some "professor of white magic," perhaps from the very conjurer whose assistant Babula had been, before he entered her service, helped her to dupe the public, and made fun of the "nice muslin Mahatmas".

It is easy to explain by quickness of movement and sleight of hand the "phenomenon of the portrait in the locket," described in chapter vi. of this narrative. She simply changed under my very eyes one locket for another, an exact duplicate of the first, and so rapidly that I did not remark it. But do not professional conjurers perform marvels compared to which all the marvels and all the "phenomena" of "Madame" are nothing? Yet this does not give them any right to proclaim their "high initiation" and their "uncommon psychical powers".

My testimony is this: that not only before me, but, to judge from the writings of Sinnett, Madame Jelihovsky, and her other panegyrists, before whom

[1] *Cf. Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, July, 1893.

you will, H. P. Blavatsky produced nothing, except the raps, which can be called a physical phenomenon, and which it is not possible to explain by conjuring and by the most ordinary simple deception. In the investigation of the London Society for Psychical Research, in Hodgson's report, examples are adduced of prominent "marvels" of "Madame's," as published by Sinnett; and all these marvels are analysed and explained in the most plain and satisfactory manner.

When she was able to produce phenomena herself, by her own means, she used to catch the favourable moment, and act. When she could not manage alone, she used to call to her assistance Babula, Olcott, or some other indispensable person among the number of her confederates. In chapters x. and xi. I have related how two phenomena were produced at Elberfeld by Olcott's aid; for the second of these phenomena, the Mahatma's letter received by Miss A by the "astral route," there was needed also the participation of the innocent little English boy.

But perhaps she was stronger in her "psychical" phenomena, in the manifestation of her exceptional spiritual powers? In this region the marvels related of her by her sister and her friends are still more astounding. By looking at a man she could read his thoughts, she could see events that were taking place at a great distance, and foretold the future with astonishing clearness.

But I must again bear witness that during all the time of my acquaintance and my relations with her I was never able to convince myself of anything of the sort. It has been my lot in the course of my

life more than once to meet people who surprised me by their subtle insight, temporary or permanent. I know cases, which for me are fully proved, of presentiments fulfilled, presentiments not misty or vague, but clearly and exactly formulated. Generally speaking I know that in the complicated inner world of man, in the secrets of his soul, slumbering in the midst of material phenomena, there are hidden the most varied powers; and that at times, owing to causes which it is not easy to submit to analysis, these powers reveal themselves in fugitive but real and sensible manifestations.

Knowing this, I should of course not have been in the least surprised if I had found something of the sort in H. P. Blavatsky. Up to the last days of our acquaintance, though I believed from the first, and was afterwards confirmed by her in the belief, that she was tricking and deceiving, I still expected some sort of evidence of her subtle insight. On her side, as the reader must have perceived from my narrative and its confirmatory documents, heaven knows what she would not have given to be able to surprise me and call my attention to anything of interest.

But I saw nothing with her, nothing. When she was preparing any "phenomenon," I knew each time just what was to happen, and saw how she directed the conversation straight to the subject fixed upon. For an example it is only necessary to recall the scene culminating in Bavaji's Russian writing, his "Blessed are they that lie".

She not unfrequently asserted, now closing her eyes, now wildly rolling them, that she was seeing scenes

passing at such or such a place. In these cases, when I succeeded in testing her clairvoyance, it *invariably* turned out that absolutely nothing of what she professed to see had in reality occurred. She did not once divine, even ever so roughly.

Before my departure from Würzburg she made me, as I have related in chapter xx., a whole series of very detailed, definite predictions, which were to be fulfilled in a very short space of time. My incredulity as to the fulfilment of these predictions could not, I imagine, alter the commands of Fate, as revealed by the "master"; and yet not a single prediction, however trifling, actually came to pass. Even professional fortune-tellers, who ask you how much fortune you want told, one ruble's worth or three, can foresee more successfully than this.

And where, in fine, are there any facts, founded on any sort of adequate evidence, to prove her clairvoyance, or, as it is called in theosophical language, her "reading in the astral light"? In the various "truths about H. P. Blavatsky" it is, as the reader already knows, by no means easy to find them out.

Let us take one such case at random. Madame Jelihovsky (*Russkoe Obozrenie*, December, 1891, p. 570) writes: "Helena Petrovna often forewarned us from great distances of the death of people living with us in Russia. The last instance of the sort happened in the spring of 1886. We were then living at Peterhof, where we received a letter written from Ostend, in which she informed us of the death of A. M. Boutleroff before the news appeared in our papers. Helena Petrovna was very fond of Professor Boutleroff, and *was in constant correspondence with him.*"

In the autumn of 1885, on my return to St. Petersburg from abroad, I met A. M. Boutleroff, and had a long conversation with him about Madame Blavatsky. He questioned me about her with great interest, and told me what he had heard of her from others; generally speaking, it was quite impossible to suppose from his words that he had any personal knowledge of her whatever. Not only if he had been in *constant correspondence* with her, but if he had even received two or three letters from her, the nature of our conversation was such that he could not have failed to tell me of it.

Still, it is possible that I may be mistaken. Then see here: A. M. Boutleroff's closest friend and connexion (the first cousin of his wife) A. N. Aksákoff, who was in constant relations with him and went through his papers after his death, *allows me to state as a fact that A. M. Boutleroff was not personally acquainted with H. P. Blavatsky and was never in correspondence with her in any way.*

One part therefore of Madame Jelihovsky's story proves to be a fiction. The rest does not satisfy the most elementary requirement of a statement of this sort; the day of the month is not stated on which Madame Blavatsky's letter from Ostend was written and posted. If it were possible to ascertain exactly the moment of the posting of the letter, it would in all probability appear that "Madame" had heard of Boutleroff's death from some telegram which she had just received, and that she wrote in her letter, with the hand which was always ready for such phrases: "He is dead, I know it; I have seen him".

All the cases of the same sort which are to be

found in the "neo-theosophical" literature about Madame Blavatsky are neither more trustworthy nor more convincing than this.

We have next to touch on the question of the "master," and the famous "Mahatmas". There have been current among the Hindus from antiquity, apart from any "Theosophical Society," legends and tales of the "great spirits" (such is the meaning of the word "Mahatma," or rather "Maha-atma"), sages who live in the mountains, in the inaccessible depths of Thibet, and possess an unusual knowledge of the hidden secrets of Nature.

We will now suppose, if only by way of a *reductio ad absurdum*, that there is not only some portion of truth contained in these legends and tales, but that the whole, positively the whole, is the actual truth. We will forget also what we know about Hodgson's report, about Madame Blavatsky's letters to the Coulombs, about Babula's "muslin" revelations, about Netherclift the expert, about Madame Blavatsky's Würzburg admissions, her proposal to "compose Koot Hoomi's Russian letters," about her confession, the Chinese paper and envelopes, etc. We will imagine a picture such as that in which the theosophists believe; Madame Blavatsky in one way or another enters into communication with the Mahatmas, and convinces herself, as she afterwards narrates in her *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*, that the "brethren of Thibet" enjoy the most exalted knowledge. For them space and time are but an empty sound; they can, though not without a considerable expenditure of vital force, forsake their bodies, and in their more or less visible and tangible astral form

appear in the twinkling of an eye wherever they will. They can, again not without expenditure of vital force, transmit their letters so as to traverse any distance with the speed of thought, to pass through material obstacles, and to fall on your head or to be written by way of postscript (as with the lines to myself added by Koot Hoomi to Madame Blavatsky's note) at the end of ordinary human letters, lying quietly at the bottom of the post-bag and travelling by railway. All this the Mahatmas can do. They initiate Helena Petrovna, thanks to her "virginity," to the degree of "adept of the second order," and instruct her to establish the Theosophical Society for the propagation of truth on this earthly ball.

The "blockhead Olcott, old cat," to use Madame Blavatsky's words, however *bête* (the opinion of him expressed to me in writing by the Mahatma Koot Hoomi), is under Helena Petrovna's protection declared president, and he is presented for a token with an "astral turban," which he is authorised to show to everybody as a sign of his dignity and his acquaintance with the Mahatmas. Mahatma Koot Hoomi undertakes the literary department, and enters into a friendly correspondence, first with Sinnett (see the Koot Hoomi letters in *The Occult World*) and afterwards with other theosophists, and even with sceptical and suspicious folk like myself. Mahatma Morya, with a request that he may be called simply "M," undertakes the part of the "master" of Helena Petrovna, and binds himself to show himself to her constantly from Thibet, to appear daily to Countess

Wachtmeister, to Mary F. and the rest, and also to ring the "silver bell".

Madame Blavatsky and Olcott do what they can. Koot Hoomi frequently writes very interesting letters, warmly and ably expressed, and is only once detected in flagrant plagiarism, wherein he very foolishly and awkwardly attempts to justify himself (see the beginning of the report of the London Society for Psychical Research). But Mahatma M., a "severe" master as H. P. B. assures us, positively ruins the whole business.

"Excuse me," I said more than once to Helena Petrovna, "you are thoroughly compromising your master. This mighty sage, having drunk his cup of milk—his daily portion of nutriment—lies down in the depth of Thibet, so to speak on the very threshold of Nirvana. His marvellous intellect is directing the fate of the world. Suddenly you call to him from here, 'Ting-ting'. He immediately effects an 'expenditure of vital force,' slips out of his coarsely material body, leaves that body in Thibet to digest its cup of milk, dons his astral form, and in the twinkling of an eye he is suddenly before you. Ting-ting. 'What are your commands, *upazika* (mother)?' 'Oh, look here, my good man, write a letter to Miss A., and drop it on her head in an hour.' 'All right.' 'And look here, my good man, write, "Certainly I was there; but who can open the eyes of those who will not see?" and slip this note into Olcott's pocket.' 'All right.' 'And look here, my good man, appear to Mary F.' 'All right.' Is all this possible? Why, it turns out that he is not your 'master' after all, but a footman who runs your errands."

Oh, how angry she used to get with me for such speeches! How she used to glare, her great eyes the colour of pale turquoise!

And all the time not one, positively not one even of the apparently most sensible theosophists was disturbed by this pitiful part played by the great mysterious teacher, the "master" who availed to snatch Helena Petrovna from death.

But let us leave out of sight these private domestic affairs. Let us regard our *upazika* as really the victim of the missionaries, of Hodgson, Myers and myself, of Madame de Morsier, etc., in fact of every one who perceived and revealed her impostures. Let us suppose that we are all either erring or unprincipled accusers. How came it that the Mahatmas, those "holy infallible sages," allowed their "elect" to suffer innocently? It only depended on them that the erring should be brought into the way of truth, and the unprincipled covered with shame. Meanwhile Koot Hoomi turned out a convicted plagiarist, and the "master" a muslin doll, although Mashka F. saw him every day.

But the "elect" is an impostor, convicted of the most various deceits; she is brought to despair and writes her "confession," and then sets about her vengeance. The "holy and infallible" Mahatmas are holding aloof as though they had nothing to do with the business. They see the abominable filth and calumny which the *upazika* and her friends, under cover of their name, are brewing in the witches' caldron for their enemies. The theosophists see it too, and help their H. P. B. to

brew the filth and calumny, dreaming of Nirvana.

"Perhaps there may really be some sort of holy and sage Mahatmas in Thibet, only it is to be doubted if they could have anything to do with Madame Blavatsky and remain holy and sage;" this is what the honest members of the Theosophical Society are bound to say. And that H. P B. had fallen into the hands of some secret politico-religious Indian brotherhood, that she adopted Buddhism in this brotherhood, and undertook the mission of spreading it in regions where Christianity had fallen and there was felt the yearning for some faith, whatever it might be—this, perhaps, is much nearer the truth than appears at first sight. At least it was my lot to catch a glimpse of something of the sort in hints which forced themselves from H. P. Blavatsky. At some moments she positively produced the impression of a person enslaved and bound by something or other.

At these moments she was very piteous and unhappy. I shall never forget how one day she exclaimed: "I would gladly return, I would gladly be Russian, Christian, orthodox. I yearn for it. But there is no returning; I am in chains; I am not my own." And in half an hour her maunderings about the "master" had begun again.

As this narrative has been in course of publication in the *Russky Vyestnik*, I have heard from various persons criticisms such as this: "Why do you say that you pitied and still pity this terrible woman? She is so guilty, so repulsive—and you yourself prove it—that she is quite incapable of evoking any

feeling of pity, especially in a man who was personally acquainted with all her impositions, her complete immorality, her malice and slanders.'

I reply that I was not only a spectator of her repulsive actions, but experienced in my own person her vile revenge; and yet, when I recall certain moments of my conversations with her, I cannot think of her without pity. I never allowed this feeling to grow too strong, I always restrained it, and inflexibly followed my line of action; I observed, tracked and caught her. When the time came, I calmly contributed everything in my power to her unmasking, I overlooked nothing, I betrayed no weakness in regard to this astounding impostor. Yet my pity for her still remained. Now that she is no more, I again, and still without weakness, am bringing into the light of day my narrative of her vile actions. Yet the pity still remains.

And this pity is no sign of any magnanimity on my part. It is due to Helena Petrovna herself, and not to me. In her quiet and good moments she was eminently sympathetic. There was within her a certain fascination, a kind of magnetism, which attracted to her with an irresistible force.

Sympathy! it is a quality which you cannot translate into words; yet all men and women, old and young, on whom those great strange eyes had looked graciously, experienced the same thing. I know, for instance, one young woman, not impulsive and not in the least sentimental, who immediately understood Madame Blavatsky by instinct. Having come into contact with this lady, who was quite young at the time, simple and modest, the famous

"Madame," whose hands and feet used to be kissed by many a blue-stocking, found herself, to her great surprise, unriddled and paralysed. Still this young lady said, and says: "Madame Blavatsky is a terrible criminal; but why did she often produce such an impression that one wanted to weep over her for intolerable pity?"

The secret of this wonderful sympathy in the "modern priestess of Isis" must be sought in her original, peculiar, and fiery talent, and in her stormy raging energy. Such talent and energy are an elemental force with which it is not easy to wrestle. This force, combined with a mental distortion, with a certain animal ignoring "in life" of the difference between right and wrong, produced one of the most interesting and characteristic phenomena of the end of the nineteenth century, the "Theosophical Society".

XXVI.

ALTHOUGH the Theosophical Society was founded at a comparatively recent date, in 1875, yet its real origin has hitherto been lost in the darkness of mystery and obscurity. Its founders, Madame Blavatsky and Olcott, as well as its first adherents, did all in their power to raise as much fog as possible, in the thick folds of which it was easy to get stifled, but impossible to find the real cradle of the interesting infant which was the fruit of the spiritual union of the Russian "wanderer" and the American "colonel".

One thing only was certain: that this interesting infant saw the light in America, at New York, and that circumstance put it in the power of those who were responsible for its remarkable existence to swathe its birth in the swaddling clothes of secrecy. On American soil it is not difficult to invent and to carry out anything; it costs nothing to spread the most fabulous rumours, orally and in print, and to find a multitude of people ready to believe them without any sort of consideration.

According to the legends set on foot by the theosophists "of the first call," H. P. Blavatsky had from her youth up enjoyed the particular protection of the "Thibetan brethren," who took her under their care and guided every step of her life in preparation

for the fulfilment of a lofty mission of world-wide importance.

When the hour was ripe for revealing the highest truths to mankind, bemired in errors of every sort, Madame Blavatsky was called to India, and there, on her reception into Buddhism, received a high initiation, and was then sent to America. Here she was to unite with another chosen, but far less worthy, vessel, with Olcott, and with him to found the Theosophical Society. Olcott formed, so to speak, the body, and Madame Blavatsky the soul, of the institution. The society was guaranteed the constant help of the adepts of Thibet, and two of them, Koot Hoomi and Morya, undertook to inspire Madame Blavatsky, and to enter into communication with those theosophists who were worthy of so high an honour.

Such, in general outline, is the essence of the legend. On the real history it is in my power to throw a considerable light, thanks to some autograph letters of H. P Blavatsky, referring particularly to the very interesting period from the end of 1874 to 1879. My readers already know what Madame Blavatsky's letters are like, and how they are to be dealt with. In the present instance, as will be seen, her writings are first-class documentary evidence; and it is easy for any one to see at once, without the aid of commentaries, what in them cannot be true and what cannot be false.

Eighteen hundred and seventy-three was the year of a decisive transformation in Helena Petrovna's life. She had now reached her forty-second year; with vanished youth there vanished all for which

she had hitherto lived. If she had been a woman like the rest she would have gone to ruin and returned to the void, or dragged on a miserable existence. But there was in her a force of energy and ability which was now, at the very moment when youth with all its storms had passed, to develop widely and freely.

The storm of life had stranded Helena Petrovna in America, and there she found herself alone, without friends or protectors, without settled means of livelihood, and without the gifts she had once possessed for making others interested in her. She did not lose her head; she looked about her and kept her ears open, and decided to try her strength in the character of a spiritist writer. She surrounded herself with mystery and raps, made acquaintance with the editors of two or three papers, and told interesting stories about her varied travels.

Gradually she became known to the American spiritists as a warm adherent of their doctrine, and as herself possessed of remarkable medianic powers. At last she left New York, for the farm of the Eddy brothers in Vermont, mediums who were at that time making a great stir. Here she got to know Colonel Olcott, who had come as a correspondent charged to inquire into the marvels wrought by the brothers Eddy.

She evidently thought that the energetic and at the same time remarkably flexible colonel would make an excellent and useful assistant, and she soon made friends with him. He immediately rendered her a great service; in his letters to his paper he wrote reams of wonderful stories about her,

and so helped her as a writer. The idea occurred to her that it would be well if she did not confine herself to writing English in the American papers, but endeavoured to do the like work for her own distant land, by translations of her articles and other interesting matter.

The great point was how to get all this to Russia, and through whose agency to press for publication. She made the acquaintance of Andrew Jackson Davis, a spiritist writer, and he told her of a man who, in his opinion, might help her in Russia. This man was A. N. Aksákoff, the editor of the Leipzig *Psychische Studien*, who had long taken interest in every sort of psychical questions, the phenomena of spiritism among them.

On 28th October, 1874, Helena Petrovna wrote to A. N. Aksákoff: "Excuse the liberty I take in addressing so unceremoniously one to whom I am entirely unknown. The facts are these: I have been living in America for about a year and a half, and have no intention of leaving. All my life is centred here, that is, of course, my inner life, as I am too old to take much interest in the outer life. An attempt should be made to explain at home what is now going on in America, in England, and in France. Spiritism here is no laughing matter. The eleven millions of spiritists in the United States according to the latest report have already grown to eighteen millions, almost fifty per cent., since the appearance of pamphlets in defence of spiritism by men such as Alfred Wallace, Crookes, Varley, etc. The whole press has begun to talk at once. Attempts at ridicule, condemnation and censure are rarer and rarer.

Last year it was still an exception to find in a so-called 'respectable newspaper' the smallest article on a fact of spiritism; now hardly a day passes that the papers are not full of hundreds of facts, proofs, and so on. The papers send reporters and artists to mediums in every direction. Only last week I came back from the Eddy brothers, well-known mediums in Rutland, Vermont, where I had passed two weeks. The house and the neighbouring lodgings were full of correspondents. With the Eddys the spirits of the departed walk about almost in full day. Several times they have already appeared without the help of the mediums, and in the evening at the time of the *séance* from fifteen to twenty spirits appear as though in the flesh before the eyes of the spectators. I talked for five minutes on the platform in Russian with my father, my uncle and other relations, as though they were alive. Seven persons of my acquaintance, long dead, of different nations, appeared and talked to me, each in his own language, and walked away. Would it not be possible for me to send you, or, rather, to keep sending, translations of articles on the facts of spiritism, not by unknown people, but by persons such as Robert Dale Owen, Colonel Olcott, and the best writers here? I know them and many others, and they will gladly give me the right of translating their productions. Olcott is a correspondent sent expressly to the Eddy brothers in Vermont by one of the best illustrated journals in New York, the *Graphic*. He has already spent more than two months there, and his illustrated articles are creating a *furore*. I am also working for the *Graphic*

and can send my articles regularly, translated and fair-copied, with copies of the illustrations drawn in pen and Indian ink. You have probably heard also about the posthumous work of Dickens—the second part of his novel *Edwin Drood*, which was left unfinished at his death. I have translated this second part, and it is lying all ready before me. Whether the spirit of Dickens wrote it, or the medium James himself, this second part is accepted by the whole American and European press (with few exceptions) as a perfect fac-simile of Dickens's style and his inimitable humour. I again apologise for the unceremonious character of my letter. I hope you may perhaps find a spare moment to send me a few words in answer. I should very much like to see the completion of Dickens's novel, of which I speak, published in Russia; I have worked hard at it, and translated it from James's manuscript, as he wrote it under the dictation of Dickens's spirit."

Before this letter had reached its destination, H. P. Blavatsky sent a second after it, dated 14th November. It was very eloquent, and full of instruction as to the woman's character.

"It is not a week since I wrote to you, and yet I already bitterly repent. This morning, as usual, when I was in town, I called on my only friend, Andrew Jackson Davis, who is highly respected by all here; he had received your letter in French, and as he does not understand the language well, he asked me to read it and translate. In this letter you write: 'J'ai entendu parler de Madame Blavatsky par un de ses parents, qui la dit un medium assez fort. Malheureusement ses communications ressent-

ent de son moral, qui n'a pas été des plus sévères.' Whoever it was told you about me, they told you the truth, in essence, if not in detail. God only knows how I have suffered for my past. It is clearly my fate to gain no absolution upon earth. This past, like the brand of the curse on Cain, has pursued me all my life, and pursues me even here, in America, where I came to be far from it and from the people who knew me in my youth. You are the innocent cause of my being obliged to escape somewhere yet farther away—where, I do not know. I do not accuse you; God is my witness that while I am writing these lines, I have nothing against you in my heart, beyond the deep sorrow which I long have known for the irrevocable past. Andrew Jackson, who feels and reads men more clearly than any book (and this no one doubts who knows him), said to me on this matter only the following significant words: 'I know you as you are now, and I *feel* for you; I cannot and will not go into your past; I shall write to Mr. Aksákoff that he does not know you personally, and that I know you' These words, spoken by A. J. Davis, will be sufficient for you, and I have no further need to try to assure you that the Madame Blavatsky of twenty years ago, and of to-day, when she is over forty, are two different persons. I am a 'spiritist' and 'spiritualist' in the full significance of the two titles.[1] I was a 'materialist' till I was

[1] [Compare with this Madame Blavatsky's own statement in *Light*, 11th October, 1884 (p. 418, col. 2): "I say again, I never was a spiritualist". Reference may also be made to her previous letter to the same effect in *Light* for 9th August, 1884, in which she declares that Mr. Lillie's statement that

nearly thirty, and believed and did not believe in spiritism. As I did not believe in God, I could not believe in a future life. Morality and good deeds I regarded as a social garment, for the sake of propriety; un masque social que l'on n'appliquait sur la figure que pour ne pas choquer l'estétique de son voisin, comme on mettrait du taffetas anglais sur une laide blessure. I hated 'society' and the so-called world as I hated hypocrisy in whatever form it showed itself; *ergo*, I ran amuck against society and the established proprieties. Result: three lines in your letter, which have awakened all the past within me and torn open all the old wounds. I have now been a spiritist for more than ten years, and now all my life is devoted to the doctrine. I am struggling for it and trying to consecrate to it every moment of my life. Were I rich, I would spend all my money to the last farthing *pour la propagande de cette divine vérité*. But my means are very poor, and I am obliged to live by my work, by translating and writing in the papers.

"This is why I have approached you with a proposition to translate into Russian everything about spiritualism that comes out here. I have translated *Edwin Drood*, and it has long been ready, and now I am translating some letters (Colonel H. S. Olcott's) which are creating at the present moment such a revolution in the minds of the materialists.

"He investigated for eight weeks the materialisation

she had been for fourteen years (1860-1874) an avowed spiritualist, is false. See also Mr. Kiddle's letter in *Light* for 11th November, 1884.—W. L.]

of spirits through the Eddy brothers in Vermont, and I went there and lived two weeks at their farm, where I got to know him. His letters and writings are worthy rivals of the books of Robert Dale Owen, Epes Sargent, and other champions. But now that I know your just but harsh judgment of me, I see that there is no hope for me but death. I shall have to drag to the grave *ce boulet de galérien social.* It is clear that neither repentance nor voluntary exile from my country, where I have brothers and sisters and beloved relations, whom I shall never see again on earth,—nothing will pacify the wrath of the furious wild beast whose name is Public Opinion.

"I have one request to make to you: Do not deprive me of the good opinion of Andrew J. Davis. Do not reveal to him that which, if he knew it and were convinced, would force me to escape to the ends of the earth. I have only one refuge left in the world, and that is the respect of the spiritualists of America, who despise nothing so much as 'free love'.

"Can it give you any satisfaction to morally destroy for ever a woman who has already been thus destroyed by circumstances? Pardon this long letter and accept the assurance of the deep respect and devotion of your obedient servant,

"HELENA BLAVATSKY.

"23 IRVIN PLACE, NEW YORK."

Of course her correspondent, on receiving this letter, hastened to reply that it would not "give him any satisfaction to morally destroy a woman for ever". H. P. Blavatsky wrote again from Hartford, 13th December, 1874.

"I do not know how to thank you for your infinite goodness. Though you have the right, like any honourable man, to despise me for my sad reputation in the past, you are so condescending and magnanimous as to write to me. If there is any hope for me in the future, it is only in the grave, when bright spirits shall help me to free myself from my sinful and impure envelope. Pardon me and forgive me for having, in a moment of despair, written you my foolish second letter. I did not understand you, and thought that you, like the rest, judged me only from the outside. When I had read your letter, I saw how I had been mistaken in you, and that you were ready to stretch out a helping hand, even to a sinner like myself. I received your letter by a sort of miracle, which I really do not understand." (There follows a long account of how the letter, sent to New York, had been received at Philadelphia in what is represented as a very supernatural way.) "I am here in Hartford for a couple of days on business. I came to confer with Colonel Olcott about certain alterations in his letters and supplements. He is now publishing a book on the subject of his letters to the *Graphic;* the book is so complete that it forms two parts, six hundred pages. The first part will consist of original letters, and the second will deal with public opinion about spiritualism, and the antagonism between science, religion, and the phenomena of spiritualism; the latter in the form in which it appeared forty years ago in the community of the Shakers. The book is too lengthy to translate; it will be better if I send a translation of the letters as they were published in

the *Daily Graphic*. All the sketches and illustrations of the spirits I will attach to the sheets of the translations—the portrait of a certain Hassan Aga as he appeared to me materialised at Chittenden, in the presence of forty people, and talked to me half in Russian and half in Georgian, and the portrait of my grandfather Gustav Alekseivitch Hahn, who also appeared twice. Generally speaking I play a great part in Olcott's letters, as all the seven spirits which appeared to me at the farm in Vermont formed a grand triumph for the cause of spiritualism. As long as the spirits only talked English and French, on avait raison de douter peut-être, car il était possible de soupçonner un jeu de prestige quelconque. Mais une fois que sept esprits materialisés, en chair et en os, tous différement habillés selon leur pays et parlant six differentes langues, le Russe, le Turc, le Georgien, le Tartare, le Hongrois et l'Italien, parurent chaque soir et que tout le monde les entendit parler comme des personnes vivantes, les choses changèrent d' aspect. Le pays est tout révolutionné. Je reçois des lettres de tous les pays et de tous les éditeurs. Un docteur nommé Beard, qui n' a passé qu' un jour à Chittenden, s'est permis d'insulter tous les spirites, en les appelant dans les journaux des 'weak-minded fools and idiots,' et je lui ai répondu à deux reprises différentes dans les journaux. Il parait que, sans le savoir, j'ai frappé juste. Les spirites les plus éminents comme Robert Dale Owen, Dr. Child et autres m'ont adressé des lettres, et les éditeurs du plus grand 'Publishing Co.' d'Amerique, ici à Hartford, m'ont écrit pour me proposer de composer

un volume de lettres sur différentes phases du spiritisme, et des manifestations physiques des esprits que j'ai vues aux Indes, en Afrique, et ailleurs. Ils veulent m'acheter cet ouvrage. J'aurais ma fortune faite si je ne portais pas malheureusement mon nom maudit de Blavatsky. Je n'ose risquer de signer de ce nom un livre quelconque. Cela pourrait provoquer des souvenirs trop dangereux pour moi. Je préfère perdre douze mille dollars que l'on m'offre, car les éditeurs me proposent douze cents par copie et ils garantissent de vendre cent mille copies. Voici les fruits amers de ma jeunesse que j'ai vouée à Satan, ses pompes et ses oeuvres! Enfin! Je vous enverrai, monsieur, à la fin de cette semaine, un paquet de faits et articles découpés des journaux les plus 'respectables' du pays. Je vous enverrai aussi mes deux lettres imprimées, car cela vous donnera d'avance l'idée de l'immense interêt que doit produire un livre comme celui de Col. Olcott. Imaginez-vous, monsieur, des esprits matérialisés de bonnes Russes parlant leur langue, des garçons Georgiens, des hommes Khourdes, de Garibaldiens Hongrois et Italiens, et enfin mon oncle,[1] the Russian president of the civil court at Grodno with the cross

[1] H. P. B. has forgotten that only a month and a half before she had already written that she had seen her "father, uncle, and other relations, and spoken to them as in life". Now all mention of her father and other relations has disappeared; only the uncle remains. The portrait of this uncle was sketched at the Eddys' farm "from nature" and published in the *Graphic;* but it seems that the deceased had changed beyond recognition since his appearance in the other world; as H. P. B. herself had subsequently to admit.

of the order of Anna on his neck, paraissant a six mille lieux (sic) de chez nous, en Amérique, dans une ferme isolée perdue au milieu des montagnes du Vermont, avec des mediums fermiers grossiers, parlant mal même leur langue maternelle—et cela *à moi* qu'ils ne connaissaient ni d'Adam ni d'Eve, devant une réunion de quarante personnes, composée de 'reporters sceptiques,' de médecins, de 'clergymen,' d'hommes distingués comme Olcott et de bien d'autres. Et pour couronner *le tout* dans une séance à part 'the dark circle' un esprit, m'apportant la medaille de mon père pour la guerre de 1828 en Turquie et me disant ces mots devant tout le monde: I bring you, Helen Blavatsky, the badge of honour, received by your father for the war of 1828. We took this medal through *the influence of your uncle* who appeared to you this night—from your *father's grave* at *Stavropol*, and bring it you as a remembrance of us in whom you believe and have faith.

"I know this medal, I have seen it on my father, and *I know* that together with his other decorations it was buried *with him*. It is drawn in the *Graphic*, and I have got it. Think of it as you like. My father died last year at *Stavropol*. How could the spirits know this? How could the mediums know that my father was a soldier and served in the campaigns against the Turks? It is a mystery, a great mystery.[1] In Russia, of course, it will not

[1] A corner of this "great mystery," as the reader will see, was soon exposed; this medal, with its absolutely fantastical appearance, became the occasion of a scandal, and Madame Blavatsky, in spite of her quickness and daring, tripped and was entangled in her evidence.

be believed. They will say that Madame Blavatsky has either gone out of her mind, or perhaps something worse. Fortunately there were forty witnesses. You cannot think what an impression this has produced on every one. I will write when I send the letters; I am afraid of wearying you. Once more, I remain, with sincere respect and devotion,

"Yours obediently,

"H. BLAVATSKY.

"*P.S.*—Colonel Olcott desires to be respectfully remembered to you, and will send you his photograph. From a furious sceptic he has become a great spiritualist after spending thirteen weeks with the Eddy brothers at Chittenden. If you permit me, I will send you my portrait lithographed as an illustration in the *Daily Graphic*, with an account of my travels in Africa and the Soudan. I do not know why they have done me such an honour as to set me beside Ida Pfeiffer and Livingstone."

Such is the "prologue" of the interesting drama in many acts, entitled "The Theosophical Society". The hero and heroine met at the farm of the brothers Eddy, where there appeared on the "platform," *en chair et en os*, strange spirits of Georgians, nursemaids, and Russian officials; they met and understood one another. They saw at once that they had a "star" in common, that they were birds of a feather, and that thus they were bound to unite in the strong bonds of indissoluble friendship. Olcott took every means to "boom" Madame Blavatsky; he told all manner of marvels about her in his letters, and he gained his end; her articles began to be

appreciated, people began to talk about her, and to take an interest in her; her portrait was to appear (though in fact it never did appear) in the pages of the *Graphic*. She did not delay repayment of the debt; she printed two articles full of triumphant expressions about Olcott's book, which had not yet been published, though it was already in the press.

Her notoriety in spiritist circles and her considerable earnings from her writings set Helena Petrovna on her feet. Her rich gifts and her daring fancy developed rapidly; she had now, thanks to Olcott's advertisement, come to be a learned woman, a remarkable medium, and a gifted traveller in Africa and the Soudan. She now felt solid ground beneath her feet. Only one thing alarmed her: if ever there should come revelations about another period of her life, and if they should come from Russia, from people who were to be trusted, then all was lost.

At the first sound which seemed to hint at the possibility of such a disaster, she began to be violently agitated, and instantly resolved on the very best course of action. Not foreseeing that she would soon need to play the part of the "pure virgin," she presented herself as the "penitent Magdalen". She disarmed her Russian correspondent, whom she regarded as so terrible, by the frankness and candour of her repentance. "I was in deepest darkness, but I have seen the light, and to this light I have given myself up entirely," she declared, openly and sincerely; "spiritism is a great truth, and I will serve it to the grave."

But it would not be a bad thing to get some one else to confirm what she had said to her Russian

correspondent, in order to make his mind quite easy. For this purpose she had recourse to Olcott himself, without in the least seeing the simplicity and transparency of the plan. She first sent a photographic counterfeit of her friend, with his autograph, and then Olcott himself sent to St. Petersburg a long epistle about the marvels of spiritualism which had excited the interest of all America. But the point lay not in the spiritualism, but in the following lines :—

" Je m'estime très heureux d'avoir fait la connaissance de Madame de Blavatsky, de laquelle il n'est pas trop dire qu'elle possède plus de savoir occulte en fait de relations mysterieuses entre les deux mondes (de Matière et d'Esprit), que toute autre personne— dans ce pays du moins. La sévérité de sa vie et l'enthousiasme qui l'anime toujours pour tout ce qui touche au Spiritisme offrent aux spiritualistes americains un fort bel exemple de conduite et de foi sincère."

This testimonial is actually written on Madame Blavatsky's letter-paper, and, like the rest of the long letter, was evidently edited by her; for I know the dreadful expressions and blunders with which Olcott used to write French in 1884. It is impossible to suppose that ten years before he had an incomparably better knowledge of the language.

XXVII.

THERE occurred at this time among the American spiritists a grave and unexpected scandal. At the *séances* of some mediums named Holmes there used to appear the materialised spirit of a young girl named Katie King. The old and respected Robert Dale Owen, a well-known spiritist writer, who had been propagating spiritism for some twenty years, was particularly interested in this materialised maiden. For several months he observed her in daily *séances* with the Holmeses ; he used to converse with her, and called her "daughter," while she spoke to him as "father". In proof of his paternal affection he presented Katie King with bracelets, rings and so on, in the belief that after the *séances* she took the presents with her into the world of spirits, where they were de-materialised and entered, so to speak, into the general economy of Nature. Why, under these circumstances, he should have given her such valuable presents, it is not easy to say for one who is not in a similar position. But a daughter of that sort is capable of making men commit follies of many kinds.

One day a certain Leslie, also a spiritualist, came to Mr. Owen, weeping and saying: "Oh, this is a very ugly business".

"What is the matter?"

"Why, that we have all been taken in in the meanest way; Katie King is not a spirit, but a live woman."

"It cannot be!" exclaimed Owen indignantly; "I was so fond of her, she is so charming, she cannot have deceived me; it is all some silly slander against my dear daughter."

But Leslie produced all the presents, not in the least de-materialised, and gave the name of the daring creature who had so successfully personated the spirit. Owen was in despair, and fell ill with vexation. When he had recovered somewhat and come to himself, he wished to satisfy himself about the fraud; so the so-called Katie King, in the presence of him and others, dressed up as a spirit and went through all her part with the greatest precision. The old man was convinced of the fraud, and, like an honest man, without fear of ridicule, he published an account of everything in the papers.

A tempest was roused, two camps were formed, and the fight grew fierce. H. P. Blavatsky, with native energy, upheld that there was no fraud, that Katie King was a spirit, and that there was a "conspiracy". She told her correspondent the whole story, and went on as follows:—

"All this silly story is neither more nor less than a plot (now almost proved) of the Protestant Jesuitical society called the 'Young Men's Christian Association,' a huge society ramifying through all the towns of America. He (R. D. Owen) has morally killed himself in public opinion by his action; all the papers hold him up to ridicule. Here is a specimen: 'The accomplice of Leslie (a well-known

scoundrel and thief who has stolen millions in railroads) dressed herself up in the costume of the spirit Katie, and in a room and "cabinet" prepared for the purpose showed in the presence of Robert Owen and others how she personated a spirit. The very same evening at the same hour the real Katie King appeared to twenty witnesses at a *séance* with the calumniated mediums, the Holmeses.' All the papers are full of pro and con. It is no good; we must console ourselves with the proverb, for the vulgarity of which I must first ask pardon: 'If God does not permit, the pig won't eat one'. I have never heard of a cleverer swindle than the whole story. Poor Robert Dale Owen! If his eyes are ever opened, I am afraid the poor old man will not survive the shock. At the present moment I am proud to say that I am making converts fast. . . . For spiritism I am ready to work night and day, so long as I have a morsel of bread, and that only because it is hard to work when one is hungry."

She did in fact work hard; she published article after article, and at the same time she was translating Olcott's endless letters about the marvels of the brothers Eddy. On 11th February, 1875, she wrote:—

"I have omitted from Olcott's letters all that concerns myself personally, keeping only what deals with the spirits and my relations to them. His friendship has carried him too far in boundless laudation, and I cannot get it into his head that in raising me to the rank of 'countess' he is only giving occasion to the Russians who know me to laugh at me. . . . I have written an article pub-

lished in the *Banner of Light* against Dr. Child, for I felt myself morally bound, as a spiritist and 'crusader of the mighty Spiritual Army,' to tell the truth, to defend the innocent, and to bring into the light of day the guilty and criminal. All this story about Katie King and the scandal have given such a set back to materialisation that they have raised quite a tempest in the land. It turns out that the Holmeses are not the only guilty ones. The chief sinner is Dr. Child,[1] who, as a speculation, hired a certain Mrs. White to allow her portrait to be taken as that of the spirit Katie King, who for some reason or another would not *poser pour son portrait à elle.* General Lippitt, Olcott, Roberts the lawyer and I have set to work to carry out an inquiry. Olcott has proved 'the real mediumship' of Holmes, and I have discovered by the admission of the photographer and of the mediums that Dr. Child thought fit to bribe both them and this Mrs. White to take in the public by the sale of these photographs. That is why I wrote this article, as I knew, or rather supposed, that we should not get at the truth in any other way than by publicly accusing Dr. Child. I hoped that if he had the least trace of conscience left he would sue me and even have me arrested for libel. I wanted this, because I have already sacrificed myself for spiritualism, and in defence of *my faith* and the *truth* I am ready at any moment to lay my head on the block; and in court, before the grand jury, I should have shown who is right and who is guilty, in this unparalleled swindle of spiritual-

[1] We hear no more of Leslie and the Protestant Jesuits.

ism, in this rascality where no one sees what is truth and what is lie, which is bringing the whole spiritist world of America and Europe to despondency and despair, and giving the sceptics the right to laugh at us. Poor Robert Dale Owen is *dying*. He is seventy-three years old, and all his life came to be bound up with the spirit Katie King. The blow has been too heavy for the old man; and though after this *soi-disant exposé* he has twice seen at the Holmeses' the Katie King whom he had seen more than eighty evenings on end, and who proved to us at the 'investigation *séances*' that she was a real spirit and not a mortal female substitute, and though she tried to comfort Owen, yet he has fallen ill, and it appears will not recover. So all his reputation as an author is gone; now people are doubting about everything he wrote. And all this is through Dr. Child, a swindler and speculator. By my article you will see that I do not spare him. I quite expected that he would send and have me arrested; . . . to my surprise Dr. Child has not even answered in the papers; since that day he has simply hidden himself in his own house, and dreads more than anything that somebody may drag him into court. He was president at the 'Spiritual Hall' here, and resigned of himself at once, because we were on the point of requesting him to go. I am receiving letters of gratitude from every side, from spiritists and non-spiritists, among others from Prof. Draper and Prof. Corson. If you hear that the sinful Blavatsky has perished, *not* in the bloom of years and beauty, by some surprising death, and that she has dematerialised 'for ever,' then you will know that it

is for spiritualism. In thee, Lord, do we put our trust, and we shall not be confounded for ever."

We now come to a most significant fact. Further on in the same letter H. P. Blavatsky writes:—

"John King has sent Olcott to Havanna for a few days. . . . I have quite ceased to get any letters from my aunts and sisters; they have evidently all forgotten me, and so much the better for them. I am no credit to them, to tell the truth. I shall now *never* go back again to Russia. My father is dead, nobody wants me, and I am altogether superfluous in the world. Here I am at least a human being; there, I am—Blavatsky. I know that everybody respects me here, and I am needed for spiritism. Now the spirits are my brothers and sisters, my father and mother. My John King alone is a sufficient recompense for all; he is a host in himself to me. And yet they call him the double of the medium, him and Crookes's Katie King. What sort of double can he be when the medium Williams is not here at all, but John King in his own person, with his own black beard and his white Chinese saucer-upside-down cap, going about here in America from one medium to another, and doing me the honour of visiting me incessantly, though he has not the least resemblance to me? No, John King is a personality, a definite, living, spiritual personality. Whether devil or good spirit, he is at all events a spirit, and not the medium's prototype. But this is not the place, after all, to argue, and I must have tired you already."

On the contrary, one can only regret that she did not enlarge on her account of John King. How-

ever, what she says is quite enough for every reader of my narrative to recognise at once in this John King the first appearance on the stage of our old acquaintance, the famous Thibetan Mahatma Morya. Only he has not yet donned his white turban, but wears a Chinese white "saucer-upside-down" cap; he is as yet a materialised spirit who shows himself through any medium, and is called John King. It is not Helena Petrovna, but the medium Williams, who has put him in circulation; but he is already incessantly visiting our heroine, and is to her a "host in himself". He already sends Olcott off to Havanna. Soon he will be transfigured, and turned into Mahatma Morya or M., the famous "master".

For a while things go on well, and the "morsel of bread" seems to be secured. Olcott puffs Helena Petrovna as much as he can. She writes about this and her successes from Philadelphia on 24th March, 1875.

"Olcott's book is producing an enormous *furore*. . . . In this book he has made many changes from his letters, by additions and omissions; but still he has mixed up my biography with the Lord knows what, princes, boyards, and imaginary governors-general—whatever they choose to tell him at the consulate.[1]

[1] So it seems that Olcott, "the most trustworthy and foremost of the witnesses to Madame Blavatsky's wonders, theosophical and otherwise," before writing her biography, did not get his materials from her, with whom he was in the closest friendly relations, and whom he was constantly seeing, but went to the Russian consulate, where they gave him the most fantastic accounts—and these he published. And she could do nothing to help it!

It is so annoying; people will only laugh at me, and suppose that I have been throwing dust in people's eyes in America, like a fool; and yet there is only one thing that I long and struggle for—that people should forget the old Blavatsky, and leave the new one alone. But it seems hard. I write so much in all the papers that there is no concealing my name. There is not a day that some new story does not come out in the papers. Blavatsky was in Africa, and went up with Livingstone in a balloon. Blavatsky dined with the King of the Sandwich Islands. Blavatsky converted the Pope of Rome to spiritualism; she predicted his death to Napoleon; she cured the Queen of Spain's face of warts by aid of the spirits, and so on. Lord, what will they not write![1] It is two months now since I have left my room, with my broken leg, and according to the papers it appears that during this time I have sailed five times round the world! They won't leave me alone even with the Mormons. They say that I have spent several days at Salt Lake City, and have induced Brigham Young to renounce polygamy. One good thing, I have frightened them so with my 'thundering articles,' as they call them, that all the papers are beginning to treat me with more respect. It is clear they are cowards. In London they extol me, if you please, as the only champion of spiritualism in America."

Things were going well, but meanwhile a thunderstorm was brewing. The first clap came from

[1] And she, poor woman, has nothing at all to do with these stories, and decides to complain of them only to one single person, who lives in Russia, but—*takes in the American papers.*

Colby, the editor of the *Banner of Light.* "I am fighting a severe battle with him at this moment, because he will not publish my second article against Dr. Child about Katie King," writes Madame Blavatsky. "There is a spiritualist for you! Whatever sort of religious fanatic an American may be, the pure-blooded Yankee always peeps out in him. So now it is war."

This first clap was followed by others. The scandal about Katie King, and the honest statements in print by old Mr. Owen, had brought about very serious consequences; the public began to cool down about spiritualism. In these circumstances Madame Blavatsky, who had just come into fashion as a spiritist, felt that she might easily go out of fashion; both processes are particularly rapid in America. It was consequently essential in one way or another to keep up the interest in herself. It was essential to invent something new, fresh and unexpected. Accordingly, after having hitherto been, as is clear from her letters, the most orthodox of spiritists, she began little by little, of course with the aid of Olcott himself, to start a heresy in spiritualism, and *invented* her occult past. In the first place Olcott included in his book an account of the Katie King scandal, and thereon, once more and in a new fashion, "boomed" Madame Blavatsky. She writes as follows to her correspondent on 12th April, 1875:—

"In a detailed account of the story of Katie King, Olcott makes out of me something mysteriously terrible, and almost leads the public to suspect that I have either sold my soul to the devil or am the direct heiress of Count Germain and Cagliostro. Do

not believe it; I have merely learnt in Egypt and Africa, in India and in the East generally, a great deal of what other people do not know. I have made friends with dervishes, and I do indeed belong to one mystic society, but it does not follow that I have become an Apollonius of Tyana in petticoats. Moreover the spirit John King is very fond of me, and I am fonder of him than of anything on earth. He is my only friend, and if I am indebted to any one for the radical change in my ideas of life, my efforts and so on, it is to him alone. He has transformed me, and I shall be indebted to him, when I 'go to the upper story,' for not having to dwell for centuries it may be in darkness and gloom. John and I are acquainted from old times, long before he began to materialise in London and take walks in the medium's house with a lamp in his hand. But all this does not interest you, I imagine."

Here are the first traces of the gradual transformation of John King into Mahatma Morya. The "master" is not invented yet, as it will only grow clear in the course of a couple of years in India, into whom the "familiar spirit" is to be turned. But this spirit is already turning out to be an "old acquaintance". As for the new-fangled heresy in spiritism, H. P. Blavatsky tries to get out of the inconsistency with her own words in her previous letters by explaining her heresy as a mere transition from practice to theory, and writes:—

"Since I have been in America I have entirely devoted myself to spiritualism. Not to the phenomenal, material side of it, but to spiritual spiritualism and the propaganda of its sacred truths. All my efforts

tend to one thing, to purify the new religion from all its filthy weeds, which grow up so fast that they threaten to stifle utterly with their dead letters the spirit of truth. In this desire and effort I have been hitherto alone. I am only now beginning to collect adepts: I have collected half a dozen, and, I say boldly, the best and brightest minds in America. Later on I will count them up for you. Every day I grow more and more convinced that so long as people, even the most Crookes of Crookeses himself, will stand up for nothing but the mere facts, *i.e.*, the phenomenal side of spiritual manifestations, so long will furious opponents appear, beginning with Tyndall and ending with the miserable Dr. Beard; and that the public, who have hitherto been treated only to stories and facts about the materialised bust of somebody's great-grandmother, and the legs in top-boots of an only imperfectly materialised Washington, or the appearance of your baker's deceased cook, will in the end always prefer to take the side of science 'for respectability's sake,' rather than to take up with us, whom they regard as half-witted and idiots. I have learnt that there is no convincing people with suspicious facts only, and also that every *genuine* fact always shows some weak side or other on which it is easy for opponents to fasten. This is why I have laid it down as a rule never in any case to permit outsiders to get anything from my mediumistic powers. Except Olcott and two or three very intimate friends, no one has seen what happens with me, and when my John or the other devils go too far, I immediately put an end to everything. I have decided to devote myself to spiritualism from the point

of view of Andrew J. Davis or Allan Kardec (though I do not believe in reincarnation in the same sense as the French spiritists): and though I always stand up for real phenomena such as the Eddys', no one can more violently attack the rogueries of the mediums and the credulity of some of the spiritists, and accordingly I have conceived the idea of setting about a serious business."

This "serious business" consisted of her attacks on Dr. Child, and of the articles which she directed against the "conspiracy" of certain "Protestant Jesuits". But the *Banner of Light* refused to publish her articles, so she writes thus:—

"I have lost no time in setting about work in another direction. I have prepared the minds of the most influential spiritists and brought them over to my side, and now, as I am convinced that there is no getting at the truth through the *Banner*, we have all joined forces, and exalted a small paper, the *Spiritual Scientist*, into our special and peculiar organ. In it I have published my last article in answer to the feeble and idiotic defence of Dr. Child in the *Banner*. I am sending you this number of the paper, and two others which have reprinted an article about me from the London *Spiritualist*. This paper, the *Spiritual Scientist*, was coming to extinction, though the management of it was always more honourable and truthful than the *Banner*, which is always one-sided, and gives nothing but the facts, without explaining the causes of the manifestations. I have got as many as a hundred subscribers for it in these three weeks; I have urged others to spend a little money, and I have myself given fifty

dollars (my last, God knows), in order only to shame the *rich* spiritists, and to force them to open their pockets. I have persuaded Olcott, Epes Sargent, Prof. Corson, Lippitt, Mrs. Andrews the authoress, Owen (who has gone into hiding and cannot bring himself to believe in the criminality of his friend Child) and others to write exclusively for the *Scientist*. I am printing circulars at my own expense."

In fact, as she had written, it was necessary for her to get a "morsel of bread," and this idea of the *Scientist* might be her salvation. Once it was settled that a *heresy* was indispensable, an organ must be established to disseminate it. H. P. Blavatsky wrote:—

"I am ready to give my life for the spread of the sacred truth. Olcott is helping me as much as he can, both with his pen and with pecuniary sacrifices for the cause. He is as passionately devoted to spiritism as I am. But he is far from rich and has nothing to live on but his literary labours, and he has to keep a wife and a whole lot of children."[1]

But the *Scientist* never got under way. Spiritism, even when dressed with the sauce of the new heresy, could not excite the slumbering attention of the public, and the question of the "morsel of bread" became urgent. Dejection breathes in Helena Petrovna's letter of May 24, 1875.

"Have you received the numbers of the *Spiritual Scientist*, which contain my last article, 'Who Fab-

[1] I imagine that many theosophists will be extremely surprised by this news about Olcott's wife and "lot of children"; for this numerous family which had to be supported soon vanished somewhere without leaving a trace.

ricates'? I have sent you several numbers, *faute de mieux*, as in the *soi-disant respectable* newspapers there is nothing whatever about spiritualism, and after the Katie King scandal, the *Banner of Light*, the *Religio-philosophical Journal*, and the *Spiritual Scientist* are foundering, and are crying for help from sheer starvation. Disaster has come upon us. Dr. Child has appeared in the character of the spiritist Antichrist, and, as the Judas of the seven councils (?), has destroyed spiritualism. Even the most advanced spiritualists begin to be afraid of public opinion, and their 'high respectability' induces many to continue to believe in spirits in secret only, and privately. Of trusty soldiers ready to die for the truth, there remains only my own little army. Like sentinels unrelieved we stand at our posts, we fight and struggle, we write and spend our last coins; but it seems as though we were petrified in our places like so many spiritist mummies, quite uselessly. In order to keep up the sinking *Spiritual Scientist*, the only conscientious, honest and fearless paper (and that, thanks to our efforts), I have spent my last two hundred dollars. I am the poorest, except Professor Brittan, and I have spent more than all. La plus jolie fille du monde ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a! Ask Olcott whether I shall spare my very life for the sake of spiritualism, in other words of the Divine Truth which is the only consolation of humanity and our last hope. This year I earned as much as 6000 dollars by my articles and other work, and all, *all* has gone for spiritualism. And now, in the present humour of infidelity, doubt and blindness, after the Katie King business, it seems to be all over.

"Once when I had written a sensational article, I used to reprint it in the form of a pamphlet, and sell several thousands at ten cents a sheet (a copy), but what can one reprint now? And one cannot even get into a quarrel with any one. Previously opponents used to appear by the hundred and write against one. Then I used to attack them directly and smash them to dust and ashes. You can judge from my article, 'Reply to Dr. Beard'. My portraits used to be printed, and the *Graphic* was to have published a picture of my martial person. Katie King appeared, and in an instant it was good-bye. Look at poor A. J. Davis; he can barely keep body and soul together, his books are not selling at all. The *Banner* has fallen from 25,000 subscribers to 12,000. Olcott is sitting on heaps of his *People from the Other World*, like Marius on the ruins of Carthage, and thinking bitter things. Not a thousand copies of his book have been sold in five months. Epes Sargent, the favourite and most learned of the American authors, the only spiritist whom every one respects and who has hitherto been regarded as an authority, is lighting his stove with his *Proof Palpable of Immortality*, his last work. Robert Dale Owen has hidden himself and vanished from the face of the earth, and so on and so on. A shock of earthquake is essential in order to rouse the American public from this apathy. And the financial position here has fallen frightfully low into the bargain. Failure succeeds failure, there is a terrible panic; those who have got money hide it, and those who have not are dying of hunger. Still Olcott does not lose heart. With the thoroughbred sense of a Yankee he has

invented a 'Miracle Club'; we shall see what will come of that. I can answer for myself; so long as my soul remains in my body I shall stand and fight for the truth."

This letter is remarkable for its honesty and veracity. Madame Blavatsky may get into a mess first with her fifty and then with her two hundred "last dollars," which she spent on the *Scientist*, but the general picture which she draws of the situation must be true beyond a doubt, for otherwise there would be no object in drawing it. She wrote in trouble, with hunger in sight; she wrote because she was in dread for the morrow, and felt the necessity of lamenting and complaining to her distant fellow-countryman. She did not stop to think; it all flowed out of itself: "Here, you see, is my trouble, to-morrow there will be nothing to eat. Something quite out of the way must be invented. It is doubtful if Olcott's 'Miracle Club' will help; I will fight to the last." Only she ought to have ended, not "for the truth," but "for existence"; that would have been more exact.

Almost two months passed, and things had not mended. She wrote from Boston, July 18, 1875: "I am ready to sell my soul for spiritualism, but nobody will buy it, and I am living from hand to mouth and working for ten or fifteen dollars when necessity comes".

And now the autumn came; the business of the "Miracle Club" had evidently not caught on, for the letter of September 10 is still in the same minor key. H. P. Blavatsky goes to Boston and to Chicago, but nowhere can she hit on anything. Even John King, the future "master," fails to cheer her heart.

She complains about him: "John is distinguishing himself by wise silence. He is in a bad humour with me, and for the last three weeks and more he only appears to me to talk nonsense and even unkindness. Tout n'est pas parfait à ce que je vois dans le Summer Land. . . . There are such attacks upon us that we do not know what it will come to. The spiritualists are furious because we do not share many of their opinions [it will be seen that the heresy is gaining strength] and do not regard all their mediums' lies as Gospel truth. The mediums are wild because we (that is Olcott and I) observe them too severely and do not believe in their honesty. The anti-spiritualists deride us as usual, and the Church members fill the clerical papers with abuse, and seriously assure the public that we have sold our souls to the devil. 'You can't say "God bless you" to every one's sneeze,' as they say. In any case the *Banner of Light* and the *Religio-philosophical Journal* are full of insinuations and malignities about us."

Things were weary and sad for Helena Petrovna, and it seems that she had attacks of home sickness, as she writes from Ithaca, September 20, 1875: "Oh, if only no one knew me at Petersburg! We would have shown your professors,[1] I and John King, how pots are made with us in the 'Summer Land'. John promises that he would come to St. Petersburg, but perhaps he is only lying and deceiving; it is hard to rely on him." It will be seen

[1] The well-known committee of professors was at this time sitting in St. Petersburg, for the investigation of spiritual phenomena.

that he has not yet succeeded in contracting his Thibetan qualities of wisdom and infallibility.

But this letter of September 20, 1875, is important not on account of John, but because it contains the first information about the birth of that interesting infant, the "Theosophical Society".

XXVIII.

THE failure which overtook the spiritist paper and the "Miracle Club," of the programme and proceedings of which we have unfortunately no trace, did not make Olcott lose heart. A brave man, who charged straight ahead, and at the same time a very practical Yankee, he hit at last upon a real *trouvaille.* Whether it was to him or Madame Blavatsky that the happy thought first occurred we do not know; but from her letters one thing is clear. Though she had prepared alike herself and others for her new character, she was none the less dejected and sick at heart. He abandoned his unsold copies of *People from the Other World*, and went on puffing his Russian "countess" with an obstinate and well-founded belief in her cleverness and ability. Everything was done at high speed, in the true American style. Madame Blavatsky wrote:—

"Olcott is now organising the Theosophical Society in New York. It will be composed of learned occultists and cabbalists, of *philosophes Hermétiques* of the nineteenth century, and of passionate antiquaries and Egyptologists generally. We want to make an experimental comparison between spiritualism and the magic of the ancients by following literally the instructions of the old Cabbalas, both Jewish

and Egyptian. I have for many years[1] been studying *la philosophie Hermétique* in theory and practice, and am every day coming to the conclusion that spiritualism in its physical manifestations is nothing but the Python of the ancients or *la lumière astrale ou sidérale de Paracelsus, i.e.*, the intangible ether which Reichenbach calls Od. The Pythonesses of the ancients used to magnetise themselves—read Plutarch and his account of the *oracular currents*, read Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, the *Magia Adamica* of Eugenius Philalethes, and others.[2] You will always see better, and can communicate with the spirits by this means—self-magnetisation.

"I am now writing a big book, which I call, by John's advice, *Skeleton Key to Mysterious Gates*. I will say nice things there about your European and American men of science, Papists, Jesuits, and that race of the half-learned, *les châtrés de la science*, who destroy everything without creating anything, and are incapable of creating."

This book, which, in spite of John's advice, did not appear under the title which he had conceived

[1] These "many years" must have caused considerable surprise to her correspondent and to all who knew her; for up to the last moment—that of the spiritist failures, and want of food—not a word has been heard of any studies of the sort; the only talk has been about the "mighty truths" of spiritism.

[2] In order to write all this it was more than sufficient that she should have read one of the works of Eliphas Levi (Abbé Constans), one of the most interesting and ablest of the popularisers of occultism. Later on she makes direct quotations from his books, but of course without any indication of their source, and ostensibly as her own.

for it, was the famous *Isis Unveiled*, which it was attempted to puff in America as something extraordinary and miraculous. The theosophists have spread and are still spreading stories to the effect that the book was written by H. P. Blavatsky with the help of her "master"; that she herself did not know what she was doing, but wrote under his dictation, or transcribed directly from "unique copies" from the Vatican, unknown to any one, which appeared before her, and then when they were no longer needed returned by the same astral route to the shelves of the secret bookcases of the Vatican.

Olcott went so far as seriously and mysteriously to announce that for certain chapters of *Isis Unveiled* there were required not only "uniques" from the Vatican, but "uniques" which had been consumed in the burning of the library of Alexandria. So, whenever necessary, the material atoms of these precious copies, scattered through space, were re-assembled and materialised, like the nurse-maids and uncles at the Eddys'; and Helena Petrovna, in her rapid, legible hand, quietly transcribed the great truths to be found in them.

These legends are evidently of later origin, as in the letter written by Madame Blavatsky to her Russian correspondent, just at the time when she was writing *Isis*, the assertions are of a different and less mysterious kind. No "master" is so much as hinted at, but there is John King, a materialised spirit, the one friend whom Helena Petrovna loved more than any one on earth, though she does not particularly respect him, as he "often deceives and talks twaddle, and it is impossible to rely on him".

She is gathering round her a few persons who are engaged, as dilettanti, in the study of occultism on the one hand and archæology on the other. These gentlemen have no small store of books on the subjects which occupy them, books which are neither rarities nor "uniques," but are mostly quite unknown to the public, who till recently held occultism and cabbalism in the greatest contempt. Madame Blavatsky flings herself eagerly among these books, and with the help of her friends determines to write a book herself.

Her *Isis*, though not sold by booksellers in Russia, is no secret; it is easy to get it on order, and any one who likes can find out for himself what sort of a book it is. It is an *American* book, striving for effect, and useful as a publication of speculation. It is a compilation of various mystic and cabbalistic writings, interspersed with occasional acute remarks and polemical sallies, and sometimes also with fairly violent abuse. There is no system in it, and on the whole it is nothing but complete disorder, a real hodge-podge. Any one, no doubt, who is entirely or partially unacquainted with the subject will probably, almost inevitably, think that the author possesses in any case immense knowledge and learning. But disenchantment soon follows on increasing acquaintance with the literature of the subject and the really learned students of occultism and cabbalism.

None the less *Isis* remains the most surprising and miraculous of Madame Blavatsky's "phenomena"; for her power of grasping, compiling and writing with giddy rapidity is amazing. She transformed

herself into a sort of automatic writing machine. The letters from her which are in my possession would themselves form a tolerably bulky volume, and she corresponded with many others too. For example, she would finish a chapter of *Isis*, put the full stop, and then instantly set about a letter to St. Petersburg, repeating with variations what she was writing about. I give a short extract from her letter of December 1, 1875:—

"All phenomena are produced by currents of the astral world or ether of the chemics. Think of Plutarch's high priest of the Temple of Apollo, and his oracular subterranean exhalations, under the intoxication of which the priestesses prophesied. All the atmosphere about us is full of spirits of different sorts. There is not a single vacant spot in the world, for nature abhors a vacuum and nonentity, as Hermes says.[1] It is only possible to understand the phenomena of our own time by studying the ancient theurgists such as Iamblichus, Porphyry, Plotinus and others."

And in this style, without connexion or order, with obvious blunders, skipping from one subject to another, she fills an immense letter, nearly as much as a whole sheet of print. Those who will may find exactly the same in *Isis*. No; though John dictated with amazing rapidity, he easily got confused, for he was

[1] These last lines are taken straight out of Eliphas Levi, an author whom she generally follows in preference to others. This is quite intelligible; he is the easiest of all, he is a populariser and writes in simple language.

not yet converted into the "master," and had not acquired his Thibetan wisdom.[1]

Ten years later it would seem that the "master" refused his assistance in obtaining "uniques". In September, 1885, when H. P. Blavatsky was beginning to write at Würzburg her *Secret Doctrine*, the supplement to *Isis* which the theosophists rate even higher, she was moving heaven and earth to obtain the many volumes of J. E. de Mirville's work, then out of print, *Des esprits et de leurs manifestations diverses*. She at length got the books, but by no astral route; they were brought from Russia by Miss X. H. P. plunged headlong into them, and would on no account allow me to see them. This puzzled me. Before my return to Russia I obtained from the *bouquinistes* of Paris the whole of Mirville, and satisfied myself that he had in fact rendered Madame Blavatsky most important services.

But from what I have said it must not be concluded that Madame Blavatsky did not at times hit upon very profound and interesting thoughts, especially in her later works. The occult literature of all times and nations, amid all sorts of rubbish and the most extraordinary nonsense, indisputably contains

[1] It was natural, and indeed inevitable, that I, like many others, should in the summer of 1884 be amazed at the amount of knowledge and variety of subject to be found in *Isis*. At that time I had but little acquaintance with the literature which served as Madame Blavatsky's material. Since then I have studied the works of various occultists and cabbalists, and I see clearly, what any one may see, that the "learned" works of Helena Petrovna are compilations, without any system, chiefly from French sources. [See Appendix C.—W. L.]

no little human wisdom. Helena Petrovna's splendid memory retained everything, and if a truth expressed by any one occurred to her, she knew sometimes how to reproduce it with great clearness and simplicity, and develop it with her real innate ability.

All depended on the subject and the moment. I have alluded, in chapter xvii. of my narrative, to the thoughts and aphorisms which were occasionally uttered by Madame Blavatsky. Such thoughts, even if one does not agree with them, cannot but interest, not only the "man in the street," but really thoughtful people. Unfortunately it was but rarely that she talked in this way; for circumstances and her character impelled her in private intercourse to be almost always agitating herself, exclaiming, wriggling and struggling with all her might.

Thus, after long and attentive observation, I came to the conclusion that in its intellectual aspect her powerful mind was of a passive and not of an active kind. On this side she showed herself quite incapable of independent creation, even in her most inspired moments; she only grasped and developed rapidly the ideas of others.

And finally we must turn our attention to one other circumstance. We may talk as much as we like of woman's rights, we may make women into judges, ministers or members of Parliament; but none the less woman remains as yet, by force of old habit, in a privileged position, and men make much smaller demands upon her than they do upon those of their own sex. "Only think. It is wonderful! Why, she is a woman! Oh, she is a marvellous woman for intellect and learning!" While this

involuntary and unconscious attitude lasts, a really impartial criticism is impossible. Even her male competitors bow courteously before a lady, without any sort of professional jealousy.

It is only thus that one can explain certain extravagant eulogies of the theosophical writings of H. P. Blavatsky, which appeared in the press of Western Europe, from outsiders, and not from members of her society. Unconscious courtesy to a "lady philosopher" is so powerful, that the authors of these eulogies never thought how they were compromising their own learning in the eyes of subsequent scholars, who would judge of Blavatsky's writings without caring whether they were written by a man, or by a woman inspired by the problematical "Mahatmas". At best the panegyrists of Helena Petrovna's "learning" prove their imperfect acquaintance with the literature of occultism, and with the authors from whose writings the "modern priestess of Isis" compiled without acknowledging her indebtedness.

The more original and brilliant writings of H. P. Blavatsky are those of another sort, where her ability and rich fancy can display themselves in all their force. I allude to the *Caves and Jungles of Hindostan* and the *Blue Mountains*, published under the pseudonym of *Radda Bay*. They were written in Russian and have not been translated,[1] and H. P. was in her life-time very anxious that the English should not

[1] [An English translation of the *Caves and Jungles* was published in 1892 and has been duly followed by the *Blue Mountains*.—W. L.]

learn their contents, as she wrote for Russian readers, and was not sparing of ridicule and censure against the Anglo-Indian Government and its representatives.

Both the *Caves* and the *Blue Mountains* have a right to a respectable place in Russian literature, and it is unfortunate that the separate edition published by Mr. Katkoff is out of print and but little known. Only, of course, the reader of the interesting narrative of Radda Bay must look on them as romance and fancy, and must on no account take on trust the facts and statements given by the author. The most bitter disenchantment awaits the too trustful reader.

But we must return to the new-born Theosophical Society. H. P. Blavatsky wrote, as we have seen, that it was founded "for experimental comparison between spiritualism and the magic of the ancients, following literally the instructions of the old cabbalas, Jewish and Egyptian". Now, two months later, while speaking of a young medium of unusual power, she says: "As soon as he is better—the spirits have been knocking him about—he will come to us and we will try to test him at our meetings of the Theosophical Society. Our society is a touchstone. That is what it was founded for."

This is something quite different! It is easy to see that the aim of the society was not yet revealed and that it would only be revealed by further circumstances; in other words, by the requirements of the public. Whatever there is a demand for will be supplied.

Still there is one misfortune: try to get out of it as you may, it is impossible to conceal the complete breach which has actually come about with "spiritism" or "spiritualism". All apologies and

explanations are insufficient. The orthodox American spiritists perceived at once that Blavatsky and Olcott had "deserted the cause," and started something which was at present unexplained; but which in any case was new and even hostile. There followed accordingly attacks on both of them, especially on Madame Blavatsky, in the spiritist papers. On December 6, 1875, H. P. wrote:—

"All the spiritists even in England are disturbed now about this Theosophical Society, because they know that I hatched it; but, if we had not hatched it, we should never in our lives have thought of interesting ourselves in spiritism or studying it. And we have already got two learned professors as members, from Boston; several reverend clergymen of divers colours, and many notabilities. It is the same spiritualism, but under another name. Now you will see if we shall not start the most learned investigations. Our vice-treasurer, Newton, is a millionaire, and president of the New York spiritualists. But the spiritists do not understand their own good. I have talked to them as much as I could—but nothing of the sort; it is heresy. And there is another thing for which the public bears us a grudge: the rules of the society are so strict that it is impossible for a man who has been in the least mixed up in any dirty matter to become a member. No free lovers or atheists or positivists are admitted to the society."

On this one really is inclined to exclaim: "Quand le diable devient vieux, il se fait hermite!" And then, on the other hand, how often she used to declare, both orally and in her letters, that a great

multitude of rakes, libertines, swindlers, and all but murderers had become members of the Theosophical Society, and been turned into saints by the influence of its foundress. It was her misfortune that, though she possessed a remarkable memory, she always used to forget what she had written even the day before; so that it is impossible to find two of her letters in which one does not come across the most curious contradictions at every step.

If the spiritists persecuted with ridicule the new society founded by the schismatics, it was no more than was to be expected in the nature of things. But on the top of this came another trouble, which drove into the background all similar vexations and supplied material for several lengthy letters from H. P. Blavatsky to her Russian correspondent. The medium Home, now deceased, who was well known even to us in Russia, accused Madame Blavatsky, first in letters to various persons and then in print, of being a fraudulent medium, on the ground of Olcott's letters and books, and attacked her private life, about which he had obtained information from first-hand sources. All this was brought about chiefly by the appearance in the *Graphic* and in Olcott's book of the drawing of the medal and clasp brought by the spirits to Helena Petrovna from the tomb of her father, M. Hahn. Home showed with good reason that it is not customary in Russia to put orders of merit in the grave, and further that the medal and clasp seemed to be creations of pure fancy.

H. P. Blavatsky fell into just the same state of mind as when ten years later she sent me her con-

fession from Würzburg. She began to assure her correspondent that this was another "conspiracy," and that Home was led to his "calumnies" by his vile jealousy of her medianic powers. While contradicting herself in every line, and entangling herself in her own words, she tried to defend herself about the medal, as well as about the "clasp in the form of a heart," and wrote: —

"I was not at my father's funeral. But at this moment the medal and clasp which were brought me are hanging on my neck; and at the stake, on my death-bed, on the rack, I could say only one thing: It is my father's *clasp*. The medal I do not remember. Of the clasp I myself broke the end in Rugodevo, and I have seen it a hundred times in my father's hands. If it is not his clasp, then it must be that the spirits are really devils, and can materialise what they like, and drive people out of their senses. But I know that even if my father's principal decorations were not buried with him, still, as he always wore this medal, which he had received for twenty-five years of service, and the one he had for the Turkish War, even when he was retired and in half-dress, it is likely that they would not take them off him. After his death there were stories about some money which he bequeathed to me, and of which I never got half, and my younger sister never writes to me at all. But I shall write to Markoff, who was present at the funeral, and to my brother at Stavropol, because I wish to know the truth. . . . Every one heard the spirit's speech, forty persons besides myself. So, then, it would seem that I had laid some plot or other with the mediums! Very

well, let them think so. How on earth do I interfere with Home? I am not a medium, I never was and never will be a professional one. I have devoted my whole life to the study of the ancient cabbala [no longer to spiritism, as she declared a short time before] and occultism, the 'occult sciences'. I really cannot, just because the devil got me into trouble in my youth, go and rip up my stomach now like a Japanese suicide in order to please the mediums. My position is very cheerless; simply helpless. There is nothing left but to start for Australia and change my name for ever."

And so on, and so on, through seven immense letters, about forty closely-written pages of large-sized paper. She repents and jeers blasphemously, she tells such stories as any one else would have kept secret, she drags in her friends and relations, and declares that she has no ill-will and forgives every one, and then suddenly tears off the mask of kindness and good-nature, and shows the devil's hoof. She declares that if Home does not hold his tongue she will take every means to publish and spread the most frightful and revolting stories about him—and she explains moreover what they will be—for "she is bound to defend herself".

She wishes to frighten not only Home but those who could influence him; as her correspondent is acquainted with them, she begs him to induce them to stop Home and make him hold his tongue, else it will be the worse for them too. In one word, it is all exactly the same as in 1886, on the occasion of my exposure of her, the same as what my readers already know from her "confession"; only in those

days there were no Mahatmas and no theosophical miracles on the stage. The rest is almost identical, but even more magnificent. Her letters contain, too, a touch of the comic; thus, among fiery phrases of despair, she quite unexpectedly honours Olcott with the title not merely of "ass," but of "ass's grandfather".

By the end of the summer of 1876 all these fumes had at last subsided, and the atmosphere had grown somewhat clearer. In her July letter is the following curious passage: "I send you some cuttings about the funeral (pagan, almost antique pagan) of our member Baron de Palma. He has left all his property to our society. Read what the papers say. Before the funeral they laughed and joked at us, but as soon as they saw it they quieted down. There was nothing to laugh at, and they looked very silly."

The estate of this "pagan" baron, as appears from statements enclosed in the letter of October 5, 1876, consisted of effects, "a good many rich silver mines," and "17,000 acres of land". Madame Blavatsky, however, hastens to explain that though the mines may be rich there is no money to work them, and that the land is good for nothing. None the less we find the following information: "Eight of us are preparing to set off for Thibet, Siam and Cambodia; but half of us are archæologists, and want to go first to Yucatan and Central America generally to compare the Egyptian ruins with the American". In other words there is at any rate enough on which to undertake this complicated and immense journey. The bequest of the pagan baron decided the further fate of the Theosophical Society.

XXIX.

AFTER Home's exposures Madame Blavatsky evidently thought that nothing made any difference now, and that it was useless to conceal the complete change of front which had been executed by the colonel and herself. The heresy rapidly passed into complete contempt and hostility to spiritism. The aim of the Theosophical Society was once more changed, and there is no longer so much as a hint of the comparative study of the phenomena of spiritualism by the aid of the "instructions of the Jewish cabbala," or of any "testing" of mediums.

Helena Petrovna had completely forgotten that "all her life had been *for many years* wholly devoted to spiritualism, and that to her last breath she would preach the doctrine of Allan Kardec". She now wrote to her correspondent that "all her life had been *for many years* devoted to the study of cabbalism," etc., etc. The aim of the foundation of the Theosophical Society was now declared to be archæological investigation and the proof of the unity of the oldest civilisation and religious beliefs in all lands.

Feeling beneath her feet some solid ground, the firmest stratum of which was, of course, the bequest of the pagan baron, and going by the experience of her life, Madame Blavatsky made up her mind that

the more assurance, impudence, and contempt for men were shown, the more probable was success. She at once declared herself erudite, an expert in antiquities of all sorts, and versed in the very depths of occultism.

She sends her correspondent a whole extempore lecture, dazzling with the fireworks of her suddenly red-hot erudition. She continually abandons her incorrect Russian in favour of English or French, according to the sources from which she is making her hasty translation. Here is a specimen of this lecture :—

". . . Last year when I wrote an essay on the identity of the ancient symbols and religion of Egypt and Assyria with the cults of the Aztecs and Quichés as described by Brasseur de Bourbourg and Herrera the Spanish historian, all the archæologists attacked me and accused me of fancifulness. But I have myself seen in Palanca and Uxman vaults with triangular arches *sans clef de voûte* (excuse my forgetting the Russian phrase) ; this sort of architecture is to be found only in the oldest ancient temples of Egypt, and in Nagkon Wat and Angkor, in Siam and Cambodia ; the ruins of the latter country puzzle all the learned societies, who have all racked their brains with every sort of hypothesis but the right one, which is that *dans les ages archaiques*, how many thousands of years ago we do not know, but certainly before the Mosaic epoch, both the Aryan and Semitic tribes (in short, before the separation of these nations) belonged to one and the same religion, the same which still survives only amid the adepts *des Sciences Occultes*. And now it is turning out as I

said. Lord Dufferin, *Gouverneur-General de Canada*, discovered in British Columbia an Indian tribe hitherto almost unknown, which lives in a village, *vieille de plusieurs siècles*, and all built of the remains of the most magnificent temples, columns, porticoes, etc. Well then? The sculpture is precisely the same as in the temples of Egypt, sphinxes, winged bulls as in Assyria, snakes, and finally the god Thoth or Tot (Hermes), with the hawk's head! I long ago pointed out the strange fact that the descendants of the Quichés in Mexico call themselves snakes. 'We are snakes, sons of the wise serpents,' they say. And thus too other tribes called themselves, the Canaanites and Medians, *i.e.*, those of them who were consecrated to the mysteries of the temples, *les initiés de la toute* [*sic*; haute?] *Theurgie*, as the father of Moses' wife for instance, Reuel, or Jethro the Midianite, who instructed him in magic. 'Snakes' holes' was the name given to the underground passages which served as the home of the mysteries of the temple, and were known only to the consecrated adepts; *cryptes des couleuvres*, as Champollion Figeac calls them. Hieroglyphs, pyramids, *les Cénocephales*, sacred apes, crocodiles, rites, adoration of the sun as the visible symbol of the invisible Godhead, all this Egyptian and Chaldean antiquity you will find in Central and North America, and much of it also in the esoteric rites of the Buddhist mystics. When Wrangel showed the world of science the possibility —or rather probability—that the Indians and Mexicans found by Cortes in America are the descendants of emigrants from Europe and Asia, and of the Tartar tribes of Siberia who had crossed from

one continent to the other by Behring Straits, they actually laughed at him; but now it turns out that he was *partially* right. All popular legends point to this. But the Indians of British Columbia, the owners of the Egyptian sphinxes and other symbols, have yet another tradition. They positively say that their ancestors flew over the ocean on birds with wings (ships with sails, as I understand it) and that each of these birds had on its breast the face of the wife of the 'Great Spirit,' Dida, as they call her. Now can we help recognising in this Dida Dido, whose name was in different nations Astarte or Venus or Dido or Elissa or Anaitis or Artemis or Al-iza, the goddess of the now Mahometan Mecca? Dido was as you know not a living queen, but a mere myth, the idol of the goddess Astarte, the unfailing attribute of every Phenician ship; they usually fixed her head *sur la proue du vaisseau*. And the Phenicians were themselves the ancestors of the Jews of Palestine in the opinion of Herodotus and more modern historians. Finally the Phenicians are the same as the Canaanites who fled before the warrior Joshua, son of Nun, and passed through the Columns of Hercules, on which according to the historians there was an inscription saying: 'Nous sommes les fils de ceux qui fuirent devant le brigand Jesus, fils de Navé'. This is stated by Procopius the historian and St. Augustine (de Bello Vandalo). That is, they who fled and escaped to America are the Hivites or *les Heveens, descendants de Heth, fils de Chanoon*. However, all this is my own particular speculation, and archæologists are of a different

opinion. I am writing you all this without knowing if it interests you. But you wish to know how we are employed at our sittings. You see it is in archæological investigations, which explain the identity of symbols of all ancient peoples. From symbols it is not far to the 'medicine men' of all Indian tribes, *i.e.*, the same adepts in magic—*quoique degenerés*—as in ancient Egypt and modern India, with its Lamas and fakirs, whom Jaccoliot describes, and the 'Art Magic'. We are getting at the roots of everything. A given symbol for example means so and so, and belongs to such and such a divinity, Jupiter for example; Jupiter in each of his transformations, as the 'Descender' in the form of rain, undoubtedly typifies some one force of Nature, whether known to the science of to-day, or still unknown (the latter is much the most usual). Each such force, 'a cosmic force' or power,' if it was once raised to a symbol by the ancients, shows that its nature or quality was known to them. The symbol dans le sens exoterique était livré à la masse ignorente et se trouve traité dans notre siecle (si savant mon Dieu!) de *superstition:* mais les initiés les prêtres de l'odyte et de sanctuaire connaissaient bien sa valeur reelle; ils savaient ce que cette force naturelle et physique contenait de mystérieux et d'occulte dans ses diverses combinaisons, ce que les savants de nos jours ignorent et regrettent par consequence."[1]

[1] [In this, as in some other cases, I have followed the somewhat eccentric French orthography and accentuation of the printed text. Whether Madame Blavatsky is responsible for it or not I do not know.—W. L.]

Further on H. P. Blavatsky declares that she has fathomed the secret of Simon the Magian, and that it is not at all hard to rise from the earth and fly. "Good gracious, are you now wondering if I have gone entirely out of my mind? Yet so it is. I announced this law—*a purely physical one*—to our members, and proved to them besides, by facts, that it is so. With an electrical battery and a powerful current we first ascertained by a well-known process what sort of magnetism there was in the carpet of the room; we electrified a cat, and it rose up several inches. It was then, in spite of my warnings, electrified more powerfully, and of course the poor cat suddenly expired."

Though I have not myself carried out any experiments of the sort, I venture to think that it was quite needless to begin by first "ascertaining by a well-known process what sort of magnetism there was in the carpet of the room," and that the only cause for wonder is that the unfortunate cat only rose a few inches, and did not jump right up to the ceiling, before expiring. I do not know; perhaps Helena Petrovna did at one time rise into the air like Simon the Magian; but I can bear witness that ten years later, in the "Würzburg period," she had completely lost the power and forgotten her secret. In the tortures of her terrible rheumatism, poor woman, she often could not raise so much as her hand.

After this letter there was a long pause of some nine months, but the interesting journey had not yet been undertaken. Evidently Madame Blavatsky and the colonel were living at their ease in New York, and they had business on hand. Before weighing

anchor and quitting America for a long time, perhaps for ever, it was of course essential to realise the estate of the "pagan baron," and to turn his silver mines and land into money. The theosophists little by little grew interested in Buddhism, and turned their hands to "soul-saving". On June 15, 1877, Madame Blavatsky writes from New York:—

"Our theosophists (the local ones) are bound in general not only not to take a drop of drink, but to fast continually as well. I am teaching them not to eat anything; if they do not die, they will learn; but they cannot hold out, so much the better for them. They are setting off straight for Nirvana, and we shall cremate them solemnly with pagan ceremony. There is Judge, who has simply become a holy Arhat. He sees visions and he flies; and he asserts that he passes out of the body every night and roams in infinite space. I ring a bell in Forty-seventh Street, in my room, and he hears it at Brooklyn, eight miles off; he starts off at once, and in two hours he appears at my call."

Here she is herself laughing at it all, and unable to refrain from ridicule in a letter to her compatriot: "See what fools they are, and how I lead them by the nose!"

On October 2, 1877, she announces the appearance of her *Isis*. "Well, my book has appeared at last. My darling was born last Saturday, September 29, but a week before my publisher had sent early copies to all the papers, and I enclose herewith the review of the *N. Y. Herald*. When I read it I almost fainted. I was prepared for abuse of every sort, and lo, here is such praise, and that from one

of the most conservative and catholic of papers. Look at the last paragraph, where it says that '*Isis Unveiled* is one of the remarkable productions of the century'.[1] Perhaps they will abuse it yet, but all the same the whole first edition (1000 copies) has been sold in two days, and the subscribers are obliged to wait another week, till the second edition appears. And the book is handsomely got up, two huge volumes with a beautiful gilt back, on which Isis unveiled sits astride. And I am quite proud of the index. It was made for me by Professor Wilder, our vice-president and a famous American archæologist. . . . We have now a multitude of corresponding fellows in India, and we are proposing next year to set off for Ceylon and to settle there, as the head-quarters of our society. I have received the rank of 'Arch Auditor' from the principal masonic lodge in India. It is the most ancient of the masonic lodges, and is said to have been in existence B.C."

But it was not all laurels. In her letter of November 6, 1877, H. P. Blavatsky complains that many papers, judging, it would seem, only by the binding and table of contents, accused her of "disseminating transcendental nonsense, and some of them, in the American fashion, call her a fool out-

[1] This extraordinary opinion of the *Herald* is perhaps explained by the fact that in America everything is sold, press puffs more than anything. There is actually said to be a regular tariff for them. Or how could a Catholic paper praise a book which contains the most desperate attacks and abuse against the Catholic religion? [But it is to be supposed that Madame Blavatsky used the word "catholic" in a general, not in a religious sense.—W. L.]

right". To one of the editors she writes: "Olcott all but gave a smack in the face; but what good would that do?"

She was terribly agitated also by another matter; Home's book had appeared, in which he did not stand on any ceremony, but related some extremely eloquent facts about her various frauds. She writes: "It is for this that I am going for ever to India,[1] and for very shame and vexation I want to go where no one will know my name. Home's malignity has ruined me for ever in Europe. He must have written some nice things, when his wife was obliged to write to Mr. Martheze in London not to pay any attention to her husband's letters, as he was *out of his mind!*[2] As for Home's book, Olcott and I, far from having read it, have never so much as set eyes on it. Before it appeared Olcott vowed never to open it, and he has kept his vow. He has had several proposals to answer it, and one of the publishers of the London *Athenæum* has written to him suggesting that he should reply to it point by point in his review. But Olcott has refused."[3]

[1] So she goes to India for ever not for the sake of the Theosophical Society, but on account of Home's stories!

[2] Of course Home's wife never wrote anything of the sort, and Madame Blavatsky invented it on the spot. It thus appears that the habit of declaring those who exposed her to be out of their minds was an old one with Helena Petrovna (see chapter xxiv.).

[3] Of course when it is impossible to refute a direct and detailed accusation, it is best to stop one's ears and hold one's tongue, even when the papers offer their columns for a reply. But the inimitable Helena Petrovna could talk about it so innocently!

After this H. P. Blavatsky's letters cease for more than eighteen months. Then took place the migration of the theosophists to India. Olcott, the man of business, had evidently succeeded in turning into money the silver mines and land of Baron de Palma. Helena Petrovna turned up in Bombay, where she established for a time the "head-quarters of the Theosophical Society". But this was not enough; she decided to publish the *Theosophist*, and writes from Bombay on July 16, 1879, enclosing a printed announcement of it in big capitals.

"Have you forgotten us? Permit me to remind you of the orphans who are now happily settled in Bombay, amid the wonder-working sunnyas and fakirs, yogis and cobras. As for psychology, our paper knocks all the spiritual journals into a cocked hat. Am I never to have one little line more from you? Colonel Olcott sends his most respectful compliments. Be so good as to let me know if I can send the paper to you in Russia without an envelope, in a simple wrapper. As you see, there is not a word of politics in it, it is all about philosophy, psychology and metaphysics. Lord! What a land of wonders this is! If you only knew! Is there not by any chance one of your papers in St. Petersburg that wants articles from India? I could write them off so as to give satisfaction. Be so generous as to let me know. Surely I read in the *Russky Vyestnik* that they want some information about the Indian religions? And here I am, as you see by the prospectus, surrounded by representatives of every conceivable religion. We have now 74,000 members of the Theosophical Society and the Arya Somaj. I

am just back from Rajputana and the North-west Provinces; I have travelled on elephants, penetrated into secret pagodas, and —— But there are no words adequately to express my emotions."

In her letter of October 18, 1879, she is in the same bold self-confident humour: "Here we are with four months of monsoon, in rain and hot steam with it. The rain pours from above, and the steam rises from below, so the dampness and moisture are inconceivable. Scorpions and centipedes in particular have got the upper hand, and we have a tolerable quantity of cobras in the garden. And so you must continually read 'mantras' as an exorcism, and it is impossible to live here without magic. It is only the astrologists, alchemists and magi of our society that save us from destruction. Still we are living and even thriving. Shall I not send you a 'mantra' against fever and all other sicknesses and misfortunes? But then you are orthodox; it would not take with you. All the famous Sanskritists and pandits of India are writing for our paper, as you see."

Further on H. P. Blavatsky announces that she has sent Katkoff "a huge article" (the first five chapters) of notes on India. This "huge article" turned out to be the beginning of her *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan*. The manuscript was corrected, so far as mistakes and inaccuracy of language were concerned, and put in order, and soon appeared in the pages of the *Russky Vyestnik*.

What followed presents no particular points of interest, and the correspondence soon ceased altogether. But the real history of the rise of the

Theosophical Society is now established by documents in the face of which all the propagandists and supporters of the theosophical legend must needs "set the seal of silence on their lips". It is Helena Petrovna Blavatsky who has herself involuntarily and ingenuously set before us the actual truth. Without reference to any secondary evidence, we have heard from herself how, "from the year 1863, she had given her whole life to spiritism," and how in America she was the most zealous of its defenders; and how too, when the question of the "morsel of bread" arose, she deserted the doctrine which she had proclaimed the "only truth," and set about inventing something new, by which she could attract the interest of the public. We have followed all the early phases of the Theosophical Society.

Later on all is perfectly clear, even from printed sources. When in 1884 Madame Blavatsky, Olcott and Mohini came, or were sent, to Europe, they appeared with cunning, and declared that their society was purely scientific, and occupied only with the investigation of "Oriental learning"; that it not only did not wound, but profoundly respected the beliefs of its members, to whatever religion they belonged. This they declared in print, in their regulations.

But, apart from the fraudulent phenomena produced by Madame Blavatsky, the Theosophical Society shockingly deceived those who joined it as members, in reliance on the regulations. It gradually grew evident that it was no universal scientific brotherhood, to which the followers of all religions might with a clear conscience belong, but a group

of persons who had begun to preach in their organ, the *Theosophist*, and in their other publications, a mixed religious doctrine. Finally, in the last years of Madame Blavatsky's life, even this doctrine gave place to a direct and open propaganda of the most orthodox exoteric Buddhism, under the motto of "Our Lord Buddha," combined with incessant attacks on Christianity.

All this was brought about by degrees, amid dense folds of mist, under the fireworks of Madame Blavatsky's fraudulent marvels, surrounded by various scandalous histories and the mysterious whispers of duped and hysterical ladies and gentlemen.

In 1875 Olcott, an American spiritist, was "sitting on the heaps of unsold copies" of his work on the marvels of the Eddy brothers, and the world-wide impostor Madame Blavatsky, in her own words, "could not find any one to quarrel with, and could not do without a morsel of bread". Now, in 1893, as the direct effect of this cause, we see an entire religious movement, we see a prosperous and growing plantation of Buddhism in Western Europe.

Whence then came the possibility of success for such a cause, founded on fancy, falsehood and deceit? Olcott might have been a hundred times more energetic, Madame Blavatsky a hundred times more able and more sympathetic in her manners to her friends: yet, sow as they might, they would have seen no rich harvest, had the seed not fallen on fruitful ground prepared to receive it. It follows that the gist of the matter lies in the soil, and nothing but analysis of the soil can solve the riddle and give the answer to every question.

There was published not long ago a new book by the well-known Max Nordau, entitled *Entartung* (Degeneration). In this book the able author examines many of the abnormalities of modern society, dissolute, nervous, psychopathic and hysterical as it is. Among other things he says that there is no conviction attained by healthy mental labour which can dominate the whole being of man with the same force as *mania*. One who suffers from mania or delirium can be convinced by nothing. He charges straight ahead, forgetting even the instinct of self-preservation. He thus becomes a powerful force to which persons of weak and unbalanced mind submit against their will. This idea of Nordau's is confirmed by various long-known observations of collective mania, which is especially striking among persons of nervous habit, particularly women, in convents and close educational establishments.

The same author goes on to adduce a remarkable case which he quotes from Goncourt's *Journal*. It appears that in Paris in 1870 a crowd of ten thousand persons "saw and read with their own eyes" a telegram announcing a victory of the French over the Germans. This telegram, at which all fingers pointed, was, as all were convinced, posted on one of the columns of a hall in the Paris Bourse. There was in fact no telegram whatever; it was only an hallucination. There are not a few cases where crowds have been inspired with such false ideas.

Hysterical persons are very apt to yield to a conviction of the unusual merits of any chance book, and even to see in it beauties which were not suspected either by the author or by those who have

laboured for his glorification. If a new sect has any success, it gathers adherents chiefly among the hysterical who are susceptible of suggestion. Young people seeking a path swell the crowd, supposing that the true path is there. The weak-minded who fear more than anything that they may be considered behind the age, join the ranks, and loudly extol the new celebrity. Would-be youthful age, anxious to conceal its years, crawls to the new temple, and chants with quavering voice the hymn of the faithful, hoping to renew its youth amid the young. All the crowd, united by its common sickness, its vanity and its cupidity, shouts and thunders far more powerfully than an incomparably larger number of healthy men, who enjoy calmly and without selfish ends the creations of healthy genius.

This view of Max Nordau's seems very applicable to the problem of the great success of the Theosophical Society. Such a success for such a cause can flourish only on soil watered by morbid exhalations, among people truly degenerate and at the same time unconsciously exhausted by profound and torturing unbelief. When faith vanishes from among men, its place is inevitably taken by superstitions of every sort. The weariness of unbelief, working on the degenerate organism, leads on fatally to the fanaticism of superstition, of all fanaticism the most cruel, the most senseless and the most gloomy; for it indicates the existence in society of a serious and quickly spreading infection.

APPENDIX A.

ABSTRACT OF PAMPHLET ENTITLED:

"H. P. BLAVATSKY AND A MODERN PRIEST OF TRUTH.

"REPLY OF MADAME Y TO MR. VS. SOLOVYOFF."

BY MADAME VERA JELIHOVSKY.[1]

I.

[MADAME JELIHOVSKY announces at once that she is the Madame Y of the *Modern Priestess of Isis*, and that she sees no reason why the fact should be concealed.]

In the first place Mr. Solovyoff has no right to write about Madame Blavatsky at all, for he knew very little of her. His whole acquaintance with her covered only six weeks in Paris, as much at Würzburg, and a few days at Elberfeld. And further, his ignorance of English made him incapable of studying her theosophical writings, the whole of which were, with the exception of *Isis Unveiled*, at that time untranslated.

His admission that he purposely "exaggerated his ignorance of English" is in itself a proof of his Jesuitical character.

[1] [In the following abridgment I have, for clearness' sake, generally retained the first person used by Madame Jelihovsky; but it will of course be understood that I do not reproduce her style, much less her exact words.—W. L.]

II.

Mr. Solovyoff's statement that the "phenomena are indissolubly bound up with theosophy" is quite untrue. I myself have never laid any weight on these phenomena, though I have always admitted my sister's high gifts in the way of psychical powers, such as clairvoyance, psychometry, thought-reading, and so on. Indeed, most of those who are now the chief supporters of theosophy, Mrs. Besant, Professor Böckh, Fullerton, Eyton, etc., have never seen any phenomena. Hartmann's *Talking Image of Urrur*, which Madame Blavatsky reprinted in *Lucifer*, is a satire on those who think that phenomena are of the essence of theosophy. The best of the theosophical workers and writers hold that the indiscreet stories of Olcott, Sinnett, Judge to some extent, and other adherents of the phenomenal side of theosophy, have done much to hurt the cause. Indeed, Madame Blavatsky herself used to speak of the phenomena learnt from Indian fakirs as "psychological tricks".

Mr. Solovyoff expressly attributes to me opinions which I do not hold. For instance, he represents me as declaring that Madame Blavatsky's writings were dictated to her by her mysterious master. Any one who will take the trouble to refer to my articles in the *Russkoe Obozrenie* for 1891 will see that I did not believe in this dictation; I stood out against the idea, in serious fear for my sister's reason, and expressed my disbelief openly to herself. She wrote me a letter beginning with the words: "I know you do not believe that I tell you the real truth about my masters. You think they are myths," and so on.

III.

Why does the author of this *fin de siècle* epic not give the least hint to his readers that I was not the only person who wrote to the papers about phenomena, but that he too did

some correspondence—and how eloquently! Those who will may convince themselves of this by turning to the July 1, 1884 number of the *Rebus*, where they will find an article by Mr. Solovyoff under the title of "An Interesting Phenomenon". This is one of the forgotten facts which I can recall to his memory by an extract from a letter of his to my sister in London, in 1884 :—

[A.][1]

"PARIS, RUE PERGOLESE, *August* 6-18, 1884.

". . . *Alea jacta est*—my letter in the *Rebus* has already raised a considerable storm, and I am beginning to be overwhelmed with questions: 'What? How? Can it be?' . . . *Ma ligne de conduite est tracée*—and you must know it. I am not afraid of ridicule, I am indifferent to the titles of fool, madman, etc. But why do you renounce me? . . . I cannot think that any 'master' (Mahatma) has told you that you have made a mistake, and that I am not necessary to you."

So Mr. Solovyoff used to be afraid that Madame Blavatsky would listen to her "masters" when they began to say that he was not necessary to the society. Curious! But in the course of time he seems to have forgotten the circumstance; though when he likes he is able to give verbal reports of conversations of the same date.

On p. 30 ff. he gives a list of every one who, in his idea, visited H. P. Blavatsky in Paris, and gives the exact number as thirty-one. But why does he think that everybody must take on trust his statistical lists? Did he act as my sister's *concierge*, and take the names of those who went in and out?

I lived in my sister's house all the time she was in Paris,

[1] [I have thus distinguished the different letters for the sake of subsequent reference.—W. L.]

and wrote a diary every day; but I know that I did not put in it all the names of her visitors, and could not undertake to count them up. I only know for certain that there was a continual stream of visitors. How can an outsider—who, though he called, it is true, almost every day, still did not sit whole days in our sitting-room—keep an account and sum up the total?

Mr. Solovyoff quotes on p. 33 a letter from Charles Richet (written evidently after the trouble brought about among the handful of Paris theosophists by Madame de Morsier in consequence of her belief in some false information given her by Mr. Solovyoff), in which he expresses his disbelief in Madame Blavatsky and her cause, or rather her phenomena. But this is what Mr. Solovyoff himself says about Richet, in one of his letters to her.

[The following letter is given by Madame Jelihovsky in separate parts, only the middle portion being quoted here. I have thought it better to give the whole letter at once in its entirety.—W. L.]

[B.]

"PARIS, *Oct.* 8, 1885.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"Which is the better, to write at random, or to hold one's tongue and work for the good of one's correspondent? . . . I have made friends with Madame Adam, and talked a great deal to her about you; I have greatly interested her, and she has told me that her *Revue* is open not only to theosophy but to a defence of yourself personally if necessary. I praised up Madame de Morsier to her, and at the same time there was another gentleman there who spoke on your behalf in the same tone, and Madame Adam wished to make acquaintance with Madame de Morsier, who will remain in Paris as the official means of communication between me and the *Nouvelle Revue*. Yesterday the meet-

ing of the two ladies took place; our Emilie was quite in raptures. . . . In any case this is very good. To-day I passed the morning with Richet, and again talked a great deal about you, in connexion with Myers and the Psychical Society. I can say positively that *I convinced Richet of the reality of your personal power and of the phenomena which proceed from you.* He put me three questions categorically. To the first two I answered affirmatively; with respect to the third I said that I should be in a position to answer affirmatively, without any trouble, in two or three months. But I do not doubt that I shall answer affirmatively, and then, you will see! there will be such a triumph that all the psychists will be wiped out. . . . Yes, so it will be; for you did not treat me as a doll? . . . I start the day after to-morrow for St. Petersburg. . . . What will happen?

"Your cordially devoted

"Vs. Solovyoff."

This letter was written on October 8, 1885; that is to say, at a time when Mr. Solovyoff knew as well as he does now all the frauds and malice of the "thief of souls," whom he had long been trying to convict and disarm, so as to appear as the self-denying saviour of the innocent souls of the Parisians, on which she had seized. But how does it happen that he tries to corrupt the innocent soul of Professor Richet by confirming him in the deadly errors against which, by his own account, he had already, in the autumn of 1884, arrayed himself with the breastplate and helmet of Don Quixote?

IV.

In chapter v. Mr. Solovyoff enters a region of pure imagination. But it is true that when Mr. Solovyoff began to tell me of his sorrows and the injustice of the world towards him, I sympathised with him, and more than once

tried to prevent his losing his head; trusting to his honour (?) I even allowed myself to make statements which, perhaps, I had no right to make.

I never concealed my mistrust of the miraculous side of my sister's work; I told her so openly, and at this time, ignorant of much which I afterwards learnt, I was in many ways unjust to her and those who were about her. I should, of course, have been more reticent in my admissions, had I foreseen that he would make use of my friendly confidence, not for his own profit only, but as a weapon against myself and my family, and endeavour to sow discord between us by revealing it.

Of the falsifications in the accounts of the two phenomena in chapters v. and vi. I shall dwell on one phrase only. Speaking of the phenomenon of the letter he says: "The letter was then handed to Miss X through the open door". This is untrue. And Mr. Solovyoff must know it; else he would not have been the first to describe the phenomenon in the *Rebus* (July 1, 1884), or to sign the minutes, which were drawn up on the spot by Madame de Morsier, and which I still have, signed by himself and others. If the letter had been for an instant taken from the table in the parlour, to which it was brought *not* by Babula *but by the postman*,[1] Mr. Solovyoff would have had a right to express his doubts; the strength of the case lies in the fact that the letter was not passed through the door, but that Miss X came into the room and there opened the letter in the presence of us all. Mr. Solovyoff himself wrote in the *Rebus:* "The circumstances under which the phenomenon took place, and the small details which I observed, do not admit

[1] [This statement, italicised by Madame Jelihovsky, is directly contradicted by the minutes, as given in Sinnett's *Incidents in the Life of Madame Blavatsky*, p. 269: "The servant who answered the bell was seen to take the letter from the postman and bring it to us". The minutes do not say *how* Miss X received the letter.—W. L.]

of the least doubt as to its genuineness and reality. There can be no question of deceit or trickery."

As for the phenomenon of the locket, I transcribe the following from my diary: "When I told Vsevolod Sergyeevich of the wonderful disappearance of my *feuilleton* from Helena's scrap-book [a third phenomenon of which he has now nothing to say], he declared to me that he could not understand what I was so surprised at. 'If,' he said, 'what we saw yesterday evening was possible—the transference, disappearance and reappearance of the portraits—then anything is possible, and I shall never be surprised at anything more. Are you not ashamed of thus mistrusting your sister and your own eyes? You will see that you will be punished for your want of faith.'"

I had left before Olcott's return, and thus did not see the end of the phenomenon of the portraits. I did not know that he buried the portrait in his garden, and I much doubt if he really did; for I find that he says at the same time that I tried to persuade him to write about the phenomenon, and this I know I never did. How could I have done so, when I had great doubts myself as to the marvellousness of the phenomena? But what I did hear with my own ears, what I recorded in the *Odessa Vyestnik*, of which I sent him a copy at the time, was his own exclamations of admiration at the "floating balls of fire". All these wonderful appearances may be the "fruit of his creative fancy"; but they are none of mine.

It is true that he recently sent me the portrait of my sister; it was accompanied with a proposal that I should return him all his letters to me and to my sister, and a promise that if I did so he would not mention my name in the articles he was then writing for the *Russky Vyestnik*.

What a multitude of superfluous words Mr. Solovyoff has put in my mouth, when describing in chap. vi. our walk in Paris, yet what a multitude of details he has forgotten to men-

tion when speaking of himself! I could not have complained that my sister was urging me to write about the phenomena, for nothing of the sort was ever true. I wrote and shall write about her and her cause, not so much about the phenomena as about theosophy in general, only of my own good pleasure, and not from any external influences.

I find from my diary that no one was so urgent for "secret audiences" with my sister as Mr. Solovyoff. Of this he does not say one word. He used to besiege her with requests to admit him to her knowledge of particularly convincing phenomena. My sister used to complain that she did not know what to do with him. It was in consequence of what she said that I tried to make him give up his vain attempts, while honestly admitting that I was far from believing in everything, and that I considered that my sister was damaging both the cause and herself in permitting her ardent admirers to proclaim aloud her "wonder-working" power.

What he says in chap. viii. about Babula is evidently a later invention, founded on the untrustworthy statements of Hodgson in the Report of the Society for Psychical Research. Babula was never either the attendant on a French conjurer or the linguist that Hodgson makes him out. Had he been, it is to be supposed that he would have found some more lucrative employment than cleaning boots and washing plates, his present occupation at Adyar. There was no sort of scandal with regard to Babula such as Solovyoff imagines; his early return to India was due solely to his wife's illness, as was well known to everybody, including Solovyoff.

I was fond of questioning this far from stupid fellow about their daily life at Adyar; I remember that I often laughed at his stories; but I faithfully declare on my conscience that there never was a word said about "muslin Mahatmas". Had he ever used such a phrase, I should

never, in my then state of incredulity as to the existence of these Hindu sages, have left it unnoticed, but should have questioned both Babula and his mistress, with whom I never hesitated to enter on a sparring match.

V.

I PASS to chapter ix., and am dumfounded at the manner in which Solovyoff speaks of *Isis Unveiled.* He complains of the way in which I published a phrase of his, to the effect that this book is "a phenomenon"; a phrase which he says was "only thrown off in conversation". The following letter is my justification:—

[C.]

"PARIS, 48 RUE PERGOLESE, *July* 7-19, 1884.

"DEAR VERA PETROVNA,

"Your letter has given me the very greatest pleasure; and besides, I thought that you would not forget your promises. . . . As my pressing work is now done, and we have time to breathe, there is now plenty of room for gloomy thoughts. I must think of some fresh work. . . . Raps and voices and all sorts of 'uncanny' things are getting the upper hand. For instance, an invisible voice says to A——: 'See, there will be raps on the window-pane directly,' and in a moment the raps begin. . . . I almost constantly perceive breathings around me, and the presence of some one, to such a degree that it is growing loathsome. . . . I have read the letters of Koot Hoomi, the Mahatma, and their contents please me much. I am reading the second part of *Isis.* and I am quite convinced that it is a phenomenon . . ." and so on.

Here is another letter from Paris to my sister in London:—

[D.]

"*October* 22, 1884.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"On Friday, though I could hardly stand on my legs, I passed the whole day with Olcott. On Saturday he and R. Gebhard, who is back from the Comtesse d'Adhémar, dined with me; after dinner I went to bed, and there I have stayed ever since. I had neglected a cold, and it got very bad. . . . The second part of *Isis*. I think you must send the first part too to Paris, for the book must be published here, without fail, for the benefit of the French. Madame de Morsier is very useful for correcting mistakes, and she is ready for work. It seems to me that if they keep the duchess as honorary president, then, if she is a woman of the least sense of honour and self-respect, she must do something for the society. Let her publish your *Isis*. Send Oakley to her; he will tell her that the Paris society greatly needs the publication of the book, and trusts that the respected duchess will fulfil this plain duty. . . .

"Perhaps it would be well for Madame de Morsier to write to her in the name of the society about the need for the publication of *Isis*? . . . Think this over and let me know. Meanwhile, *au revoir*.

"Yours with all my heart,

"VS. SOLOVYOFF."

To pass on to the visit at Elberfeld; what right has Solovyoff, in view of the prophetical visions described on p. 75, to doubt the reality of the appearance of Mahatma Morya? If we are to admit that his conversation with this astral body was due to suggestion on the part of Madame Blavatsky, why does he not tell us whose suggestion it was that produced the visions of natural scenery with which he became acquainted only on the following

day? It must have been some magician of no less power than Madame Blavatsky.

What shall we say of Solovyoff's account of the visit of the "demi-god" whose inspiration he will not admit in my sister's case? The present version shows the mixture of truth and falsehood which is the worst of lies. I am sure that in a letter to me, which I will look for, he did not express the least doubt, but related everything as a certain fact. It is true that he afterwards raised the question whether his vision was not due to suggestion, and partly to the length of time for which he had looked at the portrait of the Mahatma; but none the less he declared that for him it was a most real fact. Visual suggestions are, as is well known, only an exact reproduction of the object seen; but he first saw the Mahatma standing, then sitting on a chair, and talked with him a whole hour on his private affairs. What a reproduction of the object seen is this!

Here are some extracts from his letter of October 18-30, 1884, in Paris:—

[E.]

"I send you with this a copy of my account of my experiences at Elberfeld, which I have sent to the London Society for Psychical Research. From this you will learn all that interests you, and you will be convinced of my courage in the face of public opinion. However, this courage has its limits, and I decidedly do not wish my adventures to get into the Russian papers. I have written to Pribytkoff[1] about this. A time comes for everything, and in one way or another all will be explained; for there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed."

Compare Solovyoff's account now given with that in the

[1] [Editor of the *Rebus*, the Russian spiritist paper, and an associate of the Society for Psychical Research.]

Report of the Society for Psychical Research. In the former we have: "I lit a candle, and it appeared to me that it was two o'clock by my watch". In the latter it is simply said: "I saw by my watch that it was two o'clock". In the former: "He began to shake his head, smiled, and said, still in the voiceless imaginary language of dreams," etc. But in the earlier account it is: "He shook his head, and said to me with a smile, 'Be sure that I am not an hallucination,'" and so on, without any mention of the language in which the Mahatma spoke. It will be admitted that the two narratives produce very different impressions.

So with the account of the letter subsequently received; the scene in which my sister sends upstairs for Olcott, asks him "on which side" he felt the presence of the "teacher," and tells him to empty out his pockets, in which is found the "fabricated letter of Morya" (he forgets that he has just said that it is Koot Hoomi, not Morya); all this is a subsequent invention; at the time there is not a word about Olcott's pocket, Solovyoff boasted that he had himself received the letter of the "teacher". See the following letter, November 9-21, 1884 :—

[F.]

". . . Now to another matter. Your reproaches are undeserved, my soul lies open before you, and I trust you entirely. I will begin with the least important. You want to know what was the private matter about which Morya spoke to me. But who spoke? was it Morya? I have grave doubts about it. . . . In my account I hope you feel no doubt on this point, I described everything as it happened. I told Mr. Myers, and had to agree to send my communication to the London Society for Psychical Research." Then follows a lengthy exposition of the possibility of hypnotic suggestion, and then a fresh account to illustrate once more

the wonderful powers and capacities of my sister. This is the incident for which he has now substituted the "note found in Olcott's pocket, between a button and a tooth-pick". Here is the first version of the story, in the same letter :—

[G.]

". . . Now here is a fact. It was also at Elberfeld that I received, to the great envy of the theosophists, an autograph letter of Koot Hoomi, and in Russian into the bargain. That it appeared in a manuscript which I was holding in my hand did not surprise me in the least; I had a presentiment of it beforehand, almost a knowledge. But what did surprise me was that the note spoke clearly and in detail about what we had been discussing a minute before. It contained an answer to my words; and during this minute I had been standing alone, no one had come near me; and if it is to be supposed that some one had previously put the note in the book, then this some one must have had command of my thoughts, and forced me to say the words, the direct answer to which was contained in the letter. . . . This amazing phenomenon I have distinctly observed myself several times, both in my own case and in that of others. What power! And beside this power, at times what powerlessness!"

To myself :—

[H.]

"*August* 28-*September* 9, 1884.

"DEAR VERA PETROVNA,

"I have just received your letter and hasten to communicate with you. . . .

"I got back a few days ago from Elberfeld, where I passed a week at poor Helena Petrovna's bedside. I must tell you that in the eyes of European doctors she is in a

very, very bad way; yet she, like those who are about her, believes more than ever in the power of her Mahatmas, and that her sickness is not unto death. In any case she will have to keep her bed at Elberfeld for a long time. The doctors have diagnosed fatty heart, diabetes, and acute rheumatism, from which her left hand is swollen, and which is not far from the heart. She suffers terribly, but is wonderfully brave-spirited. As for wonders, there is no end of them. So after all she may recover, and with my whole heart I hope she may, for I love her."

Observe that this letter was written under the immediate impression of the return from Elberfeld, where Solovyoff had condemned Helena Petrovna Blavatsky as guilty without appeal. Here are a few more lines from the same time, when, if we are to believe his own words, he regarded the Mahatmas as fictitious creations of Madame Blavatsky's imagination: —

[I.]

"*October* 30, 1884.

"Helena Petrovna leaves Liverpool to-morrow, for Egypt first, and then on to India. How she is still alive, how she can travel, travel such a distance and at this time of year, all this is a marvel to me. Or, rather, it is one of the proofs of the existence of the Mahatmas."

The following extract is from a letter of November 9-21, 1884: —

". . . And when she (H. P. B.) comes to the end of her life, which I cannot but think is now only artificially prolonged by some magic power, I shall always grieve for this most unhappy and remarkable woman."

VI.

I GIVE some more letters, all referring, as will be seen, to the period of which he speaks with such righteous indignation in his chapter xii.

[K.]

"*September* 26, 1884.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"As I am not in possession of magic powers, I cannot know how you are getting on if I receive no news, and if my letters remain unanswered. But why do you not know and see what is going on here? As you have heard, the Duchess de Pomar has resigned the presidency. She is deeply offended with the colonel. The defender of the American negroes has actually shown want of tact in dealing with a European *grande dame*.

"Of the various gossip, rumours and scandals it is unpleasant and not worth while to talk. Dramar and Baissac might have been useful, but they have lost heart now. Madame de Morsier is fretting and fuming, and is only held in by her love for Koot Hoomi and partly by myself. What I can do I am doing. I care nothing for the Theosophical Society, the significance of which escapes me, thanks to your distrust of me; but I care a great deal for your reputation. If I cannot do anything for it here, I could in Russia. So it is essential that I should meet * * * I might, with his help, clip * * * 's wings; I might encourage him, for after the Elberfeld visit every one wants encouragement, for there were many blunders at Elberfeld—not of your making, but for some reason perhaps you do not know of them. I have nothing to do with the rest, but I must bring you out clear. I cannot write in full detail. If you wish—it will be clear to you. Do speak out.

"Yours with all my heart,

"Vs. SOLOVYOFF."

Unfortunately most of my sister's Russian correspondence was, at my own wish, burnt after her death. There survives only what she herself gave me, and what was sent to me later from Adyar. I am thus not able to say what it was

on which Mr. Solovyoff could not write in full. The following letters refer to pp. 93 ff. :—

[L.]

"*Monday.*" (No day or month.)

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"I have just received your letter. Believe it or not as you like, neither it nor the Koot Hoomi postscript caused me the least surprise. I shall produce a sensation through Madame de Morsier. Mohini's coming, if he is well and steadily directed, is very opportune. . . . What a disgrace, that I should not talk English!

"It is positively essential that you and I should meet; it is impossible for me to write at length; how happy I should be if you would come to see me. . . . And not I alone, but *we*. And you would like it too, I hope. Paris is not far out of the way from Elberfeld to London.

"Perhaps we could come to an understanding in Russian. . . . And I would escort you to London. . . .

"I do not know how to beg you not to be in a hurry to resign. Let us talk it over first, and if it is inevitable, then I will leave it to you to say what must be done and where you will go.

"What can one do by correspondence? I wait for further news.

"Yours with all my heart,

"VS. SOLOVYOFF.

"*P.S.*—Do not get agitated, in the name of all the saints."

Why is it that he was so anxious to persuade my sister not to resign? About what was he so anxious to "come to an understanding"? And is there not a curious contradiction? He has stated in print that he would have left her at peace if she would have listened to his advice;

if she would have devoted herself solely to literary work, and abandoned theosophy; and yet, when she wishes to resign the presidency of the "dark society, so deadly to human souls," he himself "does not know how to beg her not to resign". He evidently expected to get something from her; this is why he postponed his resignation from the Theosophical Society till the beginning of 1886, and did not publish anything about her till after her death. It is only the ignorant whom he can deceive by pretending that so long as I held my tongue about theosophy he would hold his. This is a falsehood. I have been constantly writing and publishing all these years, and he well knew it, but he did not raise his voice, *because he was afraid of my sister*. He was obliged to wait for her death to speak freely.

Meanwhile he was deceiving not only her, but me, against whom he had no cause of complaint. He was continually writing me affectionate letters, apparently from pure love of deceit. And in these he never omitted to insert reassuring sentences about Helena, such as the following (dated Nov. 9, 1884):—

[M.]

"I never play a double game with any one, and in proof of it I may quote some phrases from her letters: 'You write that you do not care about the society, but I have devoted to it life, health, soul, honour, career'. 'If you, my true friend, actually suspect me of making a fraudulent phenomenon when a real one does not succeed, what will my enemies say?' But she knows that I really love her, and that I am her friend."

When some unfavourable rumours came to my ears, I hastened to accuse every one but the real offender, and allowed myself to be deluded by his virtuous words.

[N.]

"DEAR VERA PETROVNA," he wrote at that time,

"I cannot fear for our friendship, however calumnies may threaten it; but what sadness all this causes! . . . It is all clear to me, and indeed one may say that Helena Petrovna has devoted her whole soul to the society. To the society and the cause. She is afraid of your influence on me to the prejudice of the society, and the society has great need of me now. My soul lies open before you," and so on.

VII.

[MADAME JELIHOVSKY gives various reasons which make it needless for her to refute the Report of the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research. The last of these she finds in the protests raised against the "intrigues of the Coulombs, Patterson, Hodgson and Co.".] All impartial people immediately revolted against these calumnies, as did Mr. Solovyoff himself, who at that time regarded things with a just and healthy eye. This is what he wrote himself to my sister:—

[O.]

"PARIS, 4 RUE BALZAC, *Friday*, *June* 12, 1885.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"The last two weeks have not passed in vain. Crookes and Sinnett have been here. I have made their acquaintance; but the thing is that all is now arranged and prepared to overwhelm, here at least—that is in the Paris press—all this rabble of Coulombs and all the asses, to what learned society soever they may belong, who could for a moment pay attention to her abominable pamphlet. The pamphlet has produced universal indignation here, and I have not even had to defend you to anybody—so that

after this dirty intrigue, they have only increased the sympathy felt for you. . . . Ah, if I could only see you!

"Your sincerely devoted and affectionate

"Vs. Solovyoff."

But I have to deal only with Mr. Solovyoff; and besides I well know that evidence of trickery, of what she herself used to call "psychological tricks," will not shake her authority, and will not injure either her or her cause in the eyes of those who do not make her whole work depend on the fact that while in India she learnt certain manifestations of forces still unknown in Europe.

VIII.

[This chapter continues the discussion of the Report of the Committee of the Society for Psychical Research, and of Mr. Solovyoff's comments. We need give here only the following:—]

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky did not "give herself out" as a widow (see p. 116), but was recognised as one by the authorities of Tiflis, who in 1884 sent her a testimonial in which she was described as "widow of Councillor of State N. V. Blavatsky". As she held no relations with him for more than twenty-five years, she had completely lost sight of him, and did not know, any more than we, whether he was alive or dead. The fault lies with the police of Tiflis, not with her.

Mr. Solovyoff quotes[1] the evidence of the London experts as to the handwriting of the Koot Hoomi letters; why does he not quote the opposite opinion of the Berlin experts? I would put two other questions: When does he suppose that my sister, among her incessant labours, had

[1] [In his abstract of the Report of the Committee on Theosophical Phenomena, omitted from chaps. xiii.-xv.—W. L.]

time to write the letters? And who writes them r
For I have official proof from the headquarters of
society that they still continue to arrive in the s
"Thibetan" envelopes.[1]

My reader must not think that I say this in ord
prove the existence of the Mahatmas or the reality of
correspondence. That is another question. I only
to point out that it is unjust to make of my sister a sc
goat, responsible for all the intrigues and offences of
society—if they exist.

IX.

MR. SOLOVYOFF says that he heard nothing of Helen
the winter of her absence in India. But if he was
terested in her doings, why did he let her go on
memorable December evening when she appeared to h
Why did he not cling to the hem of her "black sacc
and question her, instead of letting her astral body es
back to India? You think I am joking. Then read
following extract from his letter to me of December
1884:—

[1] [The opinion given by the Berlin expert has been dealt wi
Mr. Hodgson in *Proceedings*, ix., p. 148, and it is sufficient he
refer to his paper.

For an answer to the question "who writes them now?" Ma
Jelihovsky cannot do better than to refer to no less an authority
Mrs. Besant herself. From statements which have been publ
in the press, it appears that Mrs. Besant has recently denounc
fabrications, proceeding from a very exalted official of the Theos
cal Society, the letters here spoken of. Those whose memory
back a very few years will not have forgotten the lofty indign
with which these very letters, appearing after Madame Blavat
death, were adduced by Mrs. Besant as a complete refutation o
attacks made upon those received during her life. See Mr. Gar
articles in the *Westminster Gazette*, Oct. 29-Nov. 8, 1894.—W.

[P.]

". . . Three weeks ago I dined in the green dining-room, which you know, with V——. I ate with a good appetite. I drank very little, as always—in a word I was quite myself. When dinner was over I went up to my room to have a cigar. I opened the door, lit a match, lighted the candle, and there was Helena Petrovna standing before me in her black sacque. She greeted me, smiled, 'Here I am,' and vanished! What does this mean? Here is your question once more, hallucination or not? How am I to tell? That it is enough to make one go out of one's mind, is certain; but I shall try not to do that." And so on to the signature,

"Yours,

"Vs. Solovyoff."

Now here he had not been dazzled by any portrait of H. P. Blavatsky, and I imagine that she could hardly have hypnotised him from beyond the sea. In other words she actually paid him a visit. And this noteworthy fact he has forgotten to mention in his reminiscences of his acquaintance with her. How fortunate that this letter enables me to fill the blank!

He wrote to me again on March 7, 1885 :—

[Q.]

"Young Gebhard has been here lately, on his return from India. He says that Helena Petrovna is very ill. We have since received Olcott's circular announcing the miracle that has been wrought on her (her recovery). But in any case, in my belief, her days are numbered. It is terribly soon. Her years are not many, and the chief thing is that her mind is clear, and her literary talent in full vigour. But what of all this now? . . ."

When my sister came back to Europe in the spring, and wrote to him from Naples (see p. 118), he answered her with a welcome of unfeigned delight:—

[R.]

"*Sunday, May* 3.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"I do not know how to express to you my delight that you are in Europe. At all events it seems that you are nearer, and that a meeting is more possible. Moreover your departure from India did not strike me as strange; on the first news of our movements in Asia,[1] A—— began to assure me that the English would infallibly begin to make themselves disagreeable to you, and that you would leave.

"Remember, I told you that the time is rapidly approaching when the Russian and the Hindu will join? You thought it was not so soon. But you see! and apart from human wishes and plans, the inevitable destinies of history do their work. . . . I cannot get the *Russky Vyestnik* here, but I heard some time ago from Moscow that your *Blue Mountains* was to begin. Probably it is already in print. Now, you see, it is the very time to write about India. Do get well! Scribble me a line. I will write to you when I am free from work, and that often.

"Your sincerely devoted

"VS. SOLOVYOFF."

At this time Mr. Solovyoff, as he used to tell me in every letter, was going through a very troublous, busy, and, in many ways, difficult period. I mention this because he allows his readers to suppose that he was the "unknown friend" who had the generosity to send Madame Blavatsky

[1] [Mr. Solovyoff is making reference to the collision between General Komaroff and the Afghans at Penjdeh on March 30, 1885. —W. L.]

a sum of money for her immediate needs. If she had suspected anything of the sort, the money would doubtless have been returned; but it was impossible to suspect it, for his letters *at that time* were full of accounts of his own impoverishment. He used to tell me all the details of how he was being swindled, though he was already, in his own words, *tout à fait à sec.* But it would seem that these generous deeds were not rare with him; here is a letter to my sister, at a period when he was (for the tenth time) fully convinced of her guilt (see the passage about the "two fishwives," p. 131):—

[S.]

"PARIS, 48 RUE PERGOLESE, *Monday, May* 18, 1885.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"What does this mean? I have written to you twice, and posted the letters myself. I have had from you one letter in which you announced your arrival at Torre del Greco. To-day Madame de Morsier tells me that you have not got my letters. I telegraphed to you at once, and I am sending this letter registered. Where our letters disappear I cannot conceive. . . . But in any case you have no right to doubt my sincere feeling for you. I do not change; that is not in my character.—I, too, am very ill, dear H. P., I am suffering seriously from my liver, and no one here has done me any good. There is no getting away from ill-luck and annoyances. . . . Believe me that I am doing everything in my power to come to see you, if I can only get strength enough and a spare week. But in my position this is so extremely difficult, and I am so tied in every way, that I much fear it will remain a dream. . . . What am I to do? . . . I have no right to live my own life. . . . I had an idea of passing this spring in Italy,—then I would have met you accidentally, so to speak. . . ."

(Here follow details of how he was being deceived and swindled. He goes on.)—"Generally speaking I have been greatly disenchanted with the people here. Relations which began by being friendly have invariably ended in every sort of exploitation, and rude demands upon my purse. . . .

"Your enemies' trick about the investigation of the phenomena may be all nonsense too. But force must be met with force. I must see you; but I have only one head, two hands, two feet, a very sickly body, and Karma binds me in every direction. . . . What is to be done? Please write something. Do recover! this is my heartfelt wish.

"Yours,

"Vs. Solovyoff."

Can these be the letters of which he speaks at the end of chapter xvi.—the letters in which he told her that he had no belief in her Mahatmas and phenomena? Where is the occasion for Helena Petrovna to beg him "for friendship's sake not to abandon the society," which he expresses no intention of abandoning? Yet, to judge from the dates, these are the only letters she received from him at that time.

As for the humorous account of Bavaji's Russian writing, I must express my conviction that if he ever wrote "Blessed are they that lie," it was at her own wish. Some of her letters of this period show that she had already observed in Mr. Solovyoff a certain "weakness of tongue"; for she complains of the annoyances caused her by his incorrect statements and fondness for talking (for she still regarded these evidences of hypocrisy as no more than thoughtless chattering). When she pointed this hint on the "blessing of them that lie" straight at Mr. Solovyoff, she probably meant to have a little laugh at him.

X.

Chapter xviii. opens with the scene of the "little silver bell" which Mr. Solovyoff picked up; how he handed it

back with a significant cough, and turned the conversation. In order to give him another opportunity of coughing significantly and turning the conversation, I quote an extract from a letter of his :—

[T.]

"PARIS, RUE PERGOLESE, *August* 6-18, 1884.

"DEAR HELENA PETROVNA,

"I have not written to you because there has been trouble in the little house with the little garden. Now things are somewhat easier. Cruel Karma! . . . At a certain sorrowful moment there was a clear and loud sound of a non-existent bell on a table, and a sudden thought of you came into my head and heart,"[1] and so on.

Can this bell, which came to comfort Mr. Solovyoff at a sad moment, have been a distant relation of the little bit of silver which he picked up at Würzburg?

When we come to the story of the essence of roses, one cannot but be sorry that poor Helena Petrovna should have been such an idiot. To think that she, a stout and anything but agile woman, at that time hardly able to move hand or foot for rheumatism, as he himself says, should have tried to act like a professional pick-pocket! Poor woman! One should be more careful with these eagle-eyed, keen-scented folk; and, by the way, one should not trust them with the keys of one's private drawers.

But if in this chapter xix. Mr. Solovyoff has presented my sister in the light of an impostor and a fool, one must do him justice, and admit that he has not treated himself much better. I feel sure that on most honourable people

[1] [Mr. Solovyoff draws attention to the fact that this letter was written more than a year before the incident with the little bit of silver and during a period of nervous derangement.—W. L.]

who read the account of his cunning, his wheedling, his flattery and deceit, intended to convict another of offences no worse than his own, Mr. Solovyoff himself, in spite of the brilliance of his intellect, his inventiveness, and his high aims, will have produced a far more disagreeable impression than she whom he wished to hand over to punishment.

I must here once more call the reader's attention to the letter of October 8, 1885, already given,[1] and ask: "Is it possible that Mr. Solovyoff wrote this letter to my sister on his return from Würzburg, if there had passed between them there what he now says?" It is hard indeed to suppose that after a complete breach, and after all of which he had convicted her, he would have been so scandalously audacious as to try to convince on her behalf people like Richet and Madame Adam; people of European reputation, who might at any time through the press call upon him to explain how he dared to deceive them. On the other hand, if it is not true that he had endeavoured to convince them of the honesty and real power of Madame Blavatsky, how could she receive such a letter from a man who had humiliated and exposed her, who had just laughed her to scorn, and then says, to please her, that he had converted to friendship and belief in her two of the prominent personages of Europe? Does not this letter incontestably prove that all which he has related in these pages is nothing but a subsequent invention for the amusement and deception of the public? I know for certain that when he came that winter to St. Petersburg he not only still believed in the possibility of the existence of the Mahatmas, but was expecting some sign of favour from them. This he told us all on his arrival, and the last words of his letter confirm it.

I must beg the reader to look at Mr. Solovyoff's letter to my sister of May 3, 1885,[2] and say if the words he there uses

[1] [See Letter [B], p. 288.] [2] [Letter [R], p. 306.]

(that she would not believe him when he predicted that the Russian and Hindu would soon join hands) agree with those which he now puts into her mouth: "I could easily organise a gigantic rebellion. I guarantee that in a year's time all India will be in Russian hands."

But let my sister speak from the grave for herself. The following is a letter she wrote me in the spring of 1886, when she was so anxious that I should go to see her at Elberfeld, and Mr. Solovyoff was so anxious that I should not.

[U.]

"ELBERFELD, *May* 16.

". . . Solovyoff now accuses me of offering myself to him as a spy of the Russian Government in India. . . . If a man in his right reason thinks seriously of such an accusation, he will see the absurdity of it. I am publicly accused of being a Russian spy, and this is made the motive of all the (supposed) fraudulent phenomena and of my 'invention of the Mahatmas'! I, a dying woman, am turned out of India just on account of such a silly accusation, which, in spite of its silliness, might have ended in prison and exile, solely because I am a Russian; and though I have already suffered from this calumny, and do not understand the A B C of politics, I am made to offer myself as a spy! And to whom? To Solovyoff! . . . To him whom I know for an incorrigible gossip and tale-bearer. . . . And so, I want to be hanged, do I? But by this means I should cut off all return to India, for ever. And so, by spreading these reports, he is playing right into the hands of England, and ruining me without cause or reason. Why, for five weeks, beginning his hints even in Paris, he himself used every day to try to persuade me (as N. and T. know) to become a Russian subject again, and to use all my influence on the Hindus against England and

for Russia. He said that this was a lofty and noble task, and would show my patriotism. He begged and prayed me to put down on paper everything that I could do in this way for Russia in India, and this paper or 'Project' he would himself present in St. Petersburg. . . . To all this I replied that I was ready to die, to lay down life and soul for Russia; that there was not a subject in Russia more attached to emperor and country than I, a citizen of America; but that I was incapable of this task, I knew nothing of politics, and should only risk my neck, and the necks of hundreds of Hindus, if I attempted it.

"There, Vera, is the holy truth, which I will repeat on my death-bed. Even if I have ceased to be orthodox, or Christian at all, I have a deep faith in the life beyond the grave, in punishment and reward. I swear by all the powers of heaven that I am telling the simple truth. . . . And he has the brazen face to ascribe his own words to me! . . .

"It is repulsive even to speak of him, and to think how sincerely I loved and trusted him. . . . Vera, beware! He will attack you too, and will morally kill you."

XI.

When Mr. Solovyoff came to St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1885, we received him as a devoted friend and he came to us every day. His constant correspondence with myself and my two eldest daughters had been most interesting; his lively conversation, his original views, and his sincerity greatly interested us. The latter quality he had assumed so well that we were really charmed by his frankness. We pitied him moreover for his misfortunes; we were attracted by the unjust (as we then thought) attitude of his family towards him, and the romantic circumstances of his life at the time. It was then that we first heard

unfriendly expressions about my sister and her cause. The letters of Helena Petrovna show that this *volte face* was entirely unexpected by her, and therefore that the remarkable "scenes" at Würzburg were only the result of his latest romantic labours. Here is an extract from one of these letters, February 2, 1886 :—

[V.]

"In your short note there flashes out as it were the new and unfavourable light in which theosophy and I and Mohini, and even some good Christians, have now been presented to you. Now listen to my song, and do not be guilty of the sin of judging people by scandal without trying to investigate it. . . .

"We bade one another farewell as though we were dearest friends, almost with tears. . . . Not a word, except vows that he would stand up for me in Russia, and help me in every way, did I hear. And then he suddenly goes, and holds his tongue. Without cause or reason he is in quite a different mood in St. Petersburg. You do not know, in the innocence of your soul, but I know; he is simply frightened of the abuse of the Psychical Society. . . . You see, they have declared of a *Gentilhomme de la Chambre* that he is either a liar or suffers from hallucinations. . . . But do read the letter, which I enclose, written just before he left Paris: 'I am sure that it will succeed; surely you did not treat me as a doll,' he writes. . . . It is evident that he is quite furious because he did not succeed in getting from me what he expected, and he has invented the excuse of anti-Christianity. . . . As for my anti-Christianity, you know what it is; I am an enemy of the ecclesiastical excesses of Protestants and Catholics; the ideal of Christ crucified shines for me every day clearer and purer, and as for the orthodox Church, they

may hang me, but I will not attack it. Russia is so dear to me, my heart so yearns for my country, that I would sell my soul into slavery for ten thousand years for its sake. But be a hypocrite I will not. There you have the whole truth, all that has encrusted and saddened my heart. I have suffered and worn myself out these ten years. I have atoned for my past sins by good, as far as I knew how; I hope that I shall present myself with a clean sheet, if my torments are taken into account. Yet, though a sinful creature, I should not like to be condemned here without appeal. I should not like to die and leave behind me a name bespattered with filth."

Mr. Solovyoff informs the reader that I was at this time on bad terms with Helena Petrovna. Whose fault was this? Who was it who went so far as to declare that my sister and another near relation had accused me of concealing the money of my dead father? And I was so deluded that I never considered that it was impossible for my sister to say this, for when my father died he was living far from me, with his other children in Stavropol, while I always lived in Tiflis, more than a thousand versts away. And Mr. Solovyoff kept up this difference; he took notes of what I told him about my sister and sent it on to her, as he sent on to me what was said about me at Elberfeld. This is proved by the following extracts from a letter of my sister, March 28, 1886 :—

[W.]

" It is wrong, Vera, and for me it is simply terrible. . . . I must tell the truth; it was my fault that they were angry with you. I have done a foolish act. In vexation and anger at you, I sent off to them a letter of Solovyoff's to me, which begins in the most mysterious style: 'After what has happened, I can have no further communication

with you'. And it ends with all sorts of allusions to matters twenty and thirty years old. . . . And where can he have heard all this? I suppose there are people in St. Petersburg who know it; they might have told him, but not in such detail, Vera! I am not angry with you; I understand your irritation; but she is more to me than a relation; she[1] is the friend of all my life, and she is indignant to know that all these nightmares of my youth, which have worn me out, are now the property of Madame M.'s *salon*, and were written down by Solovyoff in your house. . . . It is useless to hide the truth: neither the Coulombs nor the psychists, no one, has ever done me so much damage as this gossip of Solovyoff's. . . . For fifteen years I have worked unweariedly for the good of men; I have helped whom I could; I have tried by my actions to expiate my sins. How many I have saved, both men and women, from debauchery, drunkenness and all sorts of sins, and converted them to belief in immortality and the spiritual side of life! and now I myself stand bespattered—nay, covered with a thick layer of filth, and by whom? Solovyoff, he—with his own heavy sin on his soul—he is the first to cast a stone at me! . . . You call it hastiness. A pretty hastiness! He has destroyed me, betrayed me like Judas, because 'on hait toujours ceux à qui l'on fait du mal sans raison'—there is no other reason for his hatred to me. He has slandered and destroyed me and hates me all the more."

If I, an incomparably cooler woman than my sister, could be thus deluded into losing my head for a time, what wonder that she, who all her life was remarkable for her sincerity and thoughtless outspokenness, should have written him frantic letters? In the letter which he gives in chapter xxii. I recognise her vehemence, passing in moments of

[1] An aunt, Madame Fadéieff.

excitement into frenzy. I recognise her; and at the same time I recognise the letter. It is the same which caused such commotion in Paris, and turned from her many of the theosophists, such as the fiery Madame de Morsier, who believed in the French translation; a translation which has never been shown me by Mr. Solovyoff or any one else, but the sense of which was told me by many who had read it, when I was staying with my sister in the following year. The chief point of this translation, I was told (I may observe that I cannot guarantee the exact truth of the statement, for I repeat that no one would ever show me the letter in French), lay in the fact that "in it Madame Blavatsky denied the Mahatmas, and admitted that she had invented their existence".

This is what specially turned the Parisians against Madame Blavatsky; but, as the reader knows, in the Russian letter there is nothing of the sort. How did it get into the translation? I shall return to this point; meanwhile I must quote one more of Mr. Solovyoff's letters; the last. It is written in answer to the one which he gives on p. 176.

[X.]

(No date.)

"HELENA PETROVNA,

"You are too wise a woman to yield to the furious madness in which you wrote the letter of yesterday, headed 'Confession'. If I were really your personal enemy, I should now have awaited with triumph your appearance in Paris and London, and should coolly have looked on at your fall, which can in no way do me any harm; for ever since I have known you I have acted with knowledge. Every step of mine with regard to you, every word which I have either spoken or written to you, points

straight to my goal, in which there is no discredit to me, as a Russian or a Christian.

"This goal, as you know, I have reached; it was not for nothing that I passed six weeks in fetid Würzburg. Can you really imagine that it is possible to scare me by impudent slanders and falsehood, and that I have not ready for you in any event—for I have always expected anything of you – a tolerable collection of surprises of all sorts? It is you who are yourself your worst enemy, and you do not know what you are doing, and on what you are rushing; I know perfectly what I am doing, and what will happen, though I have none of your Mahatmas to incite me. . . . You see I have a cool head, as you yourself said; while yours is hot beyond belief, and when it is once fired, you simply see nothing. . . .

"Do you want a scandal? You have had little enough already? Very well, if you please, you are welcome. And so we will set to work. . . .

"I have nothing more to say to you. I am far, very far, from being your enemy, and I give you my best wishes, especially for your tranquillity, far away from all these agitations.

"If you compare yourself to a wild boar, and want to bite,—very well; the traps are ready. Pardon this tone. It is yours, not mine.

"Vs. Solovyoff."

XII.

When the plan of driving Helena Petrovna Blavatsky out of the Theosophical Society, and restricting her to literary work, failed, and he was convinced that he had nothing to expect in the way of favours from the Mahatmas, he at last, in February, 1886, definitely broke with the society and its foundress. The chief point by which he showed the change

of front was the dissemination among the Paris theosophists of the belief that she had herself denied the existence of the Mahatmas, and admitted that they were an invention of her own.

When we heard of this, we were at our wits' end. Knowing how my sister had been worried by Mr. Solovyoff's prayers for the aid of the Mahatmas, where it seems they found it impossible to give it (I cannot say why, as I have no clear proofs), I thought she had taken this extreme measure in order to get rid of his importunity. I wrote to my sister to ask how she could have been so outspoken, without exacting a promise that he would keep her confession secret. My sister replied that she was sure that she had never made any admission of the sort. But I did not believe this, and thought that in a moment of passion she must have falsely accused herself, and then forgotten. This had happened more than once; in moments of excitement she sometimes had calumniated herself, in order to escape a temporary annoyance; her friends were aware of this trait of thoughtlessness in her, and used to reprove her for her want of foresight.

Knowing that Mr. Solovyoff was soon to come back to Russia, my sister begged me to see him, and read her Russian letter; this I easily did, as he and his wife again came to stay with me for a few days.[1] When I had read it, I was astonished, and at once expressed my perplexity; there was in the letter no admission that the Mahatmas were an invention. How then had the Parisians come to believe it? Mr. Solovyoff himself answered that he did not know how. I was also surprised to see that the Russian letter was all covered with the stamps of M. Jules Baissac. Mr. Solovyoff explained that this was done for the sake of attestation, to show that the translation was correct. I

[1] [Mr. Solovyoff denies this.]

answered: "Then where is the translation? Let me see it." But Mr. Solovyoff explained that he had neither the original nor a copy; it was in the hands of Madame M. in Paris. I could only conclude that there was some error in the translation, and so I said, begging him to give me a copy of the Russian letter, if not the original, in order that I might prove to every one that there was no admission of guilt, but only the frenzy of an angry and excited woman. This he refused. Why?

When I got to Elberfeld, and heard the accounts of those who had read the letter, what I supposed was this: that the sentence, "I will say, and publish in the *Times*, that the Master and K. H. are the products of my own imagination," must have been translated in a categorical instead of a conditional sense, in which form I remembered it.[1] But now that I have seen the letter in print, I think that the "denial of the Mahatmas" may have been more simply arrived at. I suppose that all the later phrases of the Russian letter were simply translated without the first and fundamental one; that there were (probably) omitted the words, "I will even take to lies, the greatest of lies, and therefore the likeliest to be believed" If this phrase was omitted, all the true sense of what follows is lost, and there is a real and convincing admission of guilt and of the fabrication of the Mahatmas.

I know that this accusation is a vital one, and therefore I do not assert it positively. I say it only by way of supposition; and this I have a right to do on the following grounds: (1) If the translation was correct, Mr. Solovyoff had no reason to refuse me a copy of the Russian letter; (2) he would certainly have sent this copy when the theosophists asked for it from Elberfeld and Paris, in order to

[1] [The Russian sentence is in act categorical and not conditional.—W. L.]

justify himself; (3) the translation, if correct, could not have caused Madame M. and others to say, as they still do, that "Madame Blavatsky *a renié les Mahatmas*"; (4) it cannot have been without intention that Mr. Solovyoff says nothing in his book about the fact that the primary cause of my journey to Elberfeld was to assure every one that in my sister's letter there was no admission that she had invented the Mahatmas; (5) finally, I have not been able, even now, after eight years, when in Paris, to get a sight of this famous translation.

Mr. Solovyoff declares that the translation is in Madame M.'s hands, and that she would show it to any one who wished to compare it. This is a falsehood. Last summer I saw Baissac myself, and asked him to let me see the French text. I also asked if he attested my sister's letter and the text. He replied that he had never to this day been able to understand why the French theosophists took fright, as in my sister's Russian letter there was nothing to compromise her, and though he found some inaccuracies in the attested translation, he insisted on their being corrected. But after waiting some three weeks I received a letter to say that the translation was not in Madame M.'s possession, and therefore he could not obtain it for me. At the same time he said positively that it agreed exactly with the Russian original; and that there was only one ambiguous phrase which might have caused doubts as to Madame Blavatsky's honesty, but that this might be taken in a conditional sense, and so he had himself understood it. But thus much is certain, that I was refused a sight of the translation.

WHERE IS IT?

[The rest of Madame Jelihovsky's pamphlet contains the following:—

A letter to Mr. Brusiloff, a common friend of Mr. Solovyoff and herself, who had been asked to bring about

a meeting, in order that Mr. Solovyoff might put some questions as to the agreement which he asserted had been entered into, that so long as Madame Jelihovsky published nothing in Russia about her sister he would also refrain from publishing. This agreement Madame Jelihovsky positively denies. She also states that he proposed to her that if she would return him his correspondence with herself and her family, he would abstain from introducing her into his narrative.

XIII.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY states that she has the letter from Ostend in which Madame Blavatsky announced Professor Butleroff's death at the same time that it was announced in the papers; and also says that she has seen a letter and portrait of this gentleman in Madame Blavatsky's hands.

A letter from Mr. Gebhard is given, in which he speaks of his high veneration for, and gratitude to, Madame Blavatsky, and in very disparaging terms of Mr. Solovyoff's character.

XIV.

THIS chapter contains various laudatory articles on Madame Blavatsky, an account of her funeral, extracts from some of the speeches delivered at it, and so on; but nothing bearing on Mr. Solovyoff's narrative.]

APPENDIX B.

REPLY TO MADAME JELIHOVSKY PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

"H. P. BLAVATSKY AND A MODERN PRIEST TRUTH".

BY V. S. SOLOVYOFF.

I.

MY LETTERS.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY, trusting that her readers will be acquainted with my *Priestess of Isis*, relies chiefly letters of mine written in 1884 and the early part of 188 period when I felt the most sincere sympathy and g pity for Madame Blavatsky *personally*, and hesitated as final decision with regard to all her phenomena. I h most frankly admitted in *Isis* that I was at first carried a thanks to the state of my nerves; I have said that I searching to see what was true and what was false Madame Blavatsky and her phenomena; I have spoke my double feeling towards this extraordinary woman, of intense attraction and pity, and now of still more vio repulsion. Every impartial reader of *Isis* will feel psychological truth of my narrative. Why does Mad Jelihovsky try to break through the door which I h myself opened wide?

It was only after the meeting at Würzburg that I got

my feeling of pity for Madame Blavatsky. It was only in St. Petersburg, at the end of 1885, on hearing the statements of Madame Jelihovsky herself and her nearest relations as to the past of the "priestess of Isis," that I ceased to waver. Madame Jelihovsky herself does not deny the fact and the nature of these communications. But now, in contradiction to her own letters, she says that I got them out of her, that she made them in insanity, and that they are untrue. But as I had no reason to suppose that Madame Jelihovsky and the witnesses to whom she referred were insane, I could hardly suppose that a sister would tell the most frightful stories of a sister if they were untrue.

After this I decided that no considerations of personal friendship, based on admiration for her talent and on the fact of her being a Russian, ought to induce me to spare Madame Blavatsky. Four months had passed. I was now free from the promise of silence which I had given her.[1] I could no longer keep up the playful tone of my letters to her. Her "confession" revolted me. Thus the very unceremonious tone of my answer to the "confession" is perfectly natural. And yet Madame Jelihovsky quotes this letter of mine,[2] every word of which confirms my narrative in *Isis*. I am much obliged to her, but why she should have thought it necessary to quote it I cannot understand.

So also the other letters which she gives confirm my narrative. I will give the necessary explanations which will enable any careful reader to see that this is so.

The curious "phenomenon" of which I speak in letter [G] was one of several which took place at Elberfeld. I was unable to give an account of it in my narrative because the "Russian letter of Koot Hoomi" has unfortunately been lost, and I have brought forward in the *Modern Priestess of Isis* only the letters of which the originals are still in

[1] [See *Isis*, p. 167.] [2] [Letter [X], p. 316.]

my possession. But what can prove my scepticism than the words, "It . . did not surprise me in the I had a presentiment of it beforehand, almost a knowle What can this mean but that I had already observe Madame Blavatsky was getting ready for a phenon and almost foresaw what it was to consist of? surprised me was not the finding of Koot Hoomi's n the book I was holding (the MS. of the *Blue Mou* which I was correcting at the time), but the fact t referred to our conversation of a minute before. A time, with my imperfect knowledge of Madame Blav I was inclined to explain this by "mental suggestio her part, and thus had every right to say, "What po while adding at the same time: "But beside this what powerlessness at times"; which, I think, is suffic clear.

But in the end, *viz.*, a year later at Würzburg, I conv myself that Madame Blavatsky had no such power; bu if every word, every movement, and every expression face was not carefully observed, she had extraordinar in guiding the conversation to any desired theme, a leading up to the words required for the effect of her p mena.

I need hardly add that "autograph letter of Hoomi" was the only expression which I could use time. I did not then know who had written the which I received, for it was long before the opini Netherclift, which showed that the Koot Hoomi scri a development of Madame Blavatsky's. At this date inclined to believe that Olcott was the writer, and i only the postscript to Madame Blavatsky's letter wh subsequently received (see *Isis*, p. 96) which oblige to give up this opinion, and to recognise in the w Madame Blavatsky's own hand disguised.

It is, therefore, not I, but Madame Jelihovsky who

to shame, when she says that I have "substituted" for this scene of the Koot Hoomi letter in the MS. book that of the finding of the Morya letter in Olcott's pocket. The fact is that these were two distinct phenomena which occurred at an interval of three days, and had nothing whatever to do with one another. It is Madame Jelihovsky who has confused them, not I; and she cannot claim that she has done it in ignorance, for she states that she has in her possession, and quotes from, my narrative in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. Now in this narrative, dated October 1, 1884, I say that "Le soir du même jour M. Olcott a trouvé dans sa poche un petit billet, que tous les théosophes ont reconnu pour être de l'écriture de M. (Morya)," etc. It is further clear that I had no intention of persuading the Society for Psychical Research of the reality of my vision of Morya, not only from the remark which they themselves published, but from the concluding words of my narrative: "Je dois dire qu'à peine revenu à Paris, où je suis actuellement, mes *hallucinations* et les *faits étranges* qui m'entouraient, se sont complètement dissipés". And finally I may quote my own words in letter [F]: "But who spoke? Was it Morya? I have great doubts."

After my return from Elberfeld I was better for a time, but at the end of 1884 I was again suffering from my nerves. So it is not odd that, at a time when my eyes were greatly fatigued with reading MSS., Madame Blavatsky should have appeared in her black sacque, or that I should have written a playful and honest account of it to Madame Jelihovsky (see letter [P]). Does she quote this letter as a proof of my nervous state? But I had already related this in the *Priestess of Isis*. So with the sound of the bell, and the whisperings which I very plainly heard about me. Once—Madame Jelihovsky does not even know this—for a couple of minutes, I also heard the rustle of a silk dress.

But the cold water cure, careful diet, a temporary remission of my overwork, and, more than all, distraction from all the "marvels of theosophy," soon put an end to these symptoms. Why, knowing their origin, should I have given a detailed account of them?

My letter [B] to Madame Blavatsky about Richet, and how I made friends with Madame Adam, is written in an obviously bantering tone, and is completely explained by the circumstances of the time. I called on Madame Adam with respect to my story, "The Magnet," which was then appearing in her *Nouvelle Revue*. It was only the second time I had met this lady, well known alike in literature and politics; and yet, supposing doubtless that I should publish in Russia my "interview" with her, she began to tell me, just as if I were an old friend, all sorts of details about her friendship with Skobeleff and Gambetta, and about all sorts of wonders, and ended by confiding to me the fact that she was a pagan. Yes, she was at that time a pagan, and practised pagan worship, with sacrifices to the ancient gods and goddesses! On hearing this I tried to appear serious, and advised her that it would be better if she turned to theosophy, and took Madame Blavatsky under her care. She begged me to continue to write for her paper and to correspond with her; she promised to be careful to answer me, and, in short, was most amiable, like a true Parisienne. And I, naughty man, went off to Russia and never published my interview or wrote her a word! Thus ended our mutual friendship.

To Charles Richet's new questions—for we had already talked about Madame Blavatsky, and he knew that I was trying to get at the truth—I replied that she was no ordinary adventuress, but an able and extraordinary woman, and that she was clearly a so-called medium, though with failing powers. This is what I meant by her "personal power and the phenomena proceeding from her". As for

the third and most important question, concerning the *theosophical* phenomena and her Mahatmas, I replied that I would let him have full, and if possible documentary, evidence in two or at most three months. I explained to him why this was (see *Isis*, p. 167).

I wrote to Madame Blavatsky about my conversation with Richet, as about Madame Adam, in a bantering tone such as was quite usual in my letters to her; and in this particular case, after all the wonders of Würzburg, I wished to lay stress on the fact that I should wait only two or three months, and that I was revolted by the *aplomb* with which she had delivered her prophecies. So I wrote teasing her and asking: "And so all will be fulfilled, all will happen as you said—is it not true? For surely you did not treat me as a doll? So all will end in your triumph and the confusion of the psychists; will it not?" On this letter it is endeavoured to found an accusation that I deceived Richet. But no attention is called to the letter from him which I have given on p. 33, though the words "peut-être réussira-t-elle. En tout cas ce ne sera ni votre faute ni la mienne" are clear enough. However, Richet's last letter, written by him for the purpose, and given below, finally settles the question of how far I "deceived" him, and gives decisive evidence as to Madame Jelihovsky's "honesty".

Letter [H] is equally pointless, and contains besides the mocking phrase "there is no end of wonders". As I say in *Isis*, in the autumn of 1884 I was so impressed by the perfectly acted sincerity and sorrow of Madame Blavatsky that I began to waver, and dared not think that she could deceive to that extent. I began to ask myself: "May not my suspicions be going too far? Suppose there is some truth after all!" The two extracts [I] only confirm this.

Letter [M] is worse than useless to Madame Jelihovsky; the phrases used about my having nothing to do with the

society, and my suspicions, in spite of my affection for personally, that Madame Blavatsky produced fraudul phenomena, are the most explicit confirmation of wha have said in *Isis*. Madame Jelihovsky does not quote entire letter but only scattered fragments. In its entir the letter would have thrown still more light on my attitu at the time.

Letter [O] only shows that, as I say in *Isis*, I did then know the truth, and could not yet believe, in spite my suspicions on many points, that Madame Blavatsky capable of such detestable frauds as those of which Coulombs accused her. The report of the Society Psychical Research did not then exist; I knew nothi only I was not convinced, and wanted to get at the tru I was in fact profoundly vexed by this abominable scan against Madame Blavatsky, as a Russian. Though I s pected her, I had as yet no clear proofs, but thought th apart from fraud, she possessed real psychical powers; I said: "Abominations like these cannot be true, this surely a libel; in any case we must inquire before believe".

The Society for Psychical Research thought exactly a did, and appointed its committee, and sent Hodgson to India. He himself says that he started convinced t it was a calumny, and changed his opinion only when had clear proofs to the contrary. I wanted to see her order to clear the matter up, and convince myself of real extent of her guilt. If she could have proved to that she was innocent, I should have been delighted.

Letter [Q]. I regret the probability of Madame Blavatsk death. What of that?

Letter [R]. In connexion with Komaroff's affair at Kush I write that the time is approaching when Russian a Hindu will join hands. What of that?

[S]. I wish to meet Madame Blavatsky, and write to

that if I had gone to Italy in the spring, as I had meant, I should have seen her there. This may serve as a supplement to my narrative of this time. Once more I ask, What of all this?

On letter [K] Madame Jelihovsky wants to know what the matter is about which I cannot write in full. The words refer to what I mentioned on p. 63 of *Isis*. At that time (1884) I was foolish enough to think that I might divert Madame Blavatsky, by degrees at all events, from her pernicious career, and direct her energies and abilities to honest and useful ends. I did not yet know what I learnt at the end of 1885 from Madame Jelihovsky's own statements and the narratives of many persons in Russia; I did not know how hopeless a case she was, and I had not yet received her famous "confession". The scene at Elberfeld had so rekindled my pity for her that I could not at this time but waver, first to one side then to the other. I calculated that my words, by showing her that personally I was fond of her, while at the same time I saw through her game and was convinced of the fraud of many of her phenomena, would untie her tongue, in personal intercourse if not on paper, and give me the possibility to act to her own advantage. All this time I did not conceal my attitude towards her from people at Paris, while to herself I wrote on this very point: "Though I am known here as a sceptic at daggers drawn with all occultism, and even with you, still, as it is also known that I am your countryman, and devoted to you as Helena Petrovna," etc.

I dissuaded her from *immediate* resignation, because this would have brought about a great scandal. I was anxious that there should be no scandal against her among strangers, because she was my countrywoman, gifted and ill. I wanted a scandal just as little in 1886; I was only forced to take action by facts and things of her own doing, after which there could be no question, for a self-respecting man,

of a "countrywoman". This is a clear and simple explanation of my words, when compared with *Isis*.

Well knowing that my letters do not contradict, but only confirm, my narrative, Madame Jelihovsky, if she can only deal me a blow, is ready once again to betray her sister, as she did during her life. She declares, on her own mere assertion, that I had certain "secret audiences" of Madame Blavatsky, and clearly hints that I was either her confederate or was endeavouring, by her aid, to gain some concealed and wicked end.

Surely every one will say that if she makes such an accusation she is bound to bring forward some sort of clear evidence. But no. Madame Jelihovsky is not the woman to acknowledge such a duty. She simply declares that "she could tell a great deal, but she has no proofs". She then says that I am "very cautious, and wrote no letters to compromise myself". Finally she appears to forget my cautiousness, and asserts that there were letters, but that she herself, with unpardonable precipitancy, had given orders for them to be burnt.

Are not Madame Jelihovsky's words beyond belief? Take the following: "Knowing how my sister had been worried by Mr. Solovyoff's prayers for the aid of the Mahatmas" (the very Morya and Koot Hoomi in whose existence I did not believe, as I wrote repeatedly to Mesdames Blavatsky and Jelihovsky, and for which Madame Blavatsky herself wrote calling me a "suspecter" and "unbelieving Thomas") "where it seems they could not give it, I cannot say why, as I have no clear proofs," etc.

"It is only the ignorant he can deceive by pretending that so long as I held my tongue about theosophy he would hold his. This is a falsehood." But I give below the written testimony of Colonel Brusiloff, whom Madame Jelihovsky herself selected as the witness of my meeting with her in December, 1891; this will prove if my statement

is a falsehood. "I have been constantly writing and publishing all these years, from time to time, and he well knew it." Where and what did she write? If she wrote, I did not know; it is impossible to keep up with the whole press, but no one has ever spoken to me of her writings. "He did not raise his voice, because he was afraid of my sister. He was obliged to wait for her death to speak freely." The documents I have given show how little I was afraid of her, and that it was not after her death, but during her life, while she was surrounded by friends, that I exposed her at Paris in the early part of 1886.

One thing at least is clearly true, that some of my letters have been suppressed by Madame Jelihovsky; precisely those which, even in her opinion, would have too plainly convicted Madame Blavatsky, and have brought to light, not any fraud on my part, but something else. Where, for instance, are my "foolish sayings about the Mahatmas"? Where do I show myself an "unbelieving Thomas"? Where is my "suspiciousness," my "conviction that the phenomena are fraudulent"? In a word, where is all that about which Madame Blavatsky herself writes in her published correspondence? Where?

II.

[THIS chapter deals with the replies from persons attacked in Mr. Solovyoff's narrative, quoted by Madame Jelihovsky. These have been omitted from the translation, for reasons already given, and there is therefore no reason for giving the replies, which in no case deal with any but secondary matters.]

III.

(1) MADAME JELIHOVSKY accuses me of having concealed from my readers the fact that I published in the *Rebus* an account of the reading of a sealed letter by Madame

Blavatsky. This is false, as in the text of my resignat this fact is given as one of the reasons which induced to resign.[1]

(2) On p. 128 I quote a letter of Madame Blavatsky Madame M., in which she describes her sad position, and s that I "talk nonsense about the Mahatmas, and am an believing Thomas". To explain this letter I mentior that at a very critical moment Madame Blavatsky h received from an unknown friend a certain sum of mon and had endeavoured to find out through Madame M. w had sent it. *That is all.* Now Madame Jelihovsky asse that I thus allow my readers to suppose that it was I w had sent her the money. Nothing of the sort ever entei my mind; why should Madame Jelihovsky imagine Only to found on it a dark insinuation. Madame Blav sky was at that time often in need, and more than or people were found to help her. Some did so openly, othe owing to circumstances, in private. In this there v nothing humiliating for her; Madame Jelihovsky ought be well aware that poverty is no crime, and that it is son times impossible to live without the help of others. Bu wish to give no support to the supposition that I help Madame Blavatsky. There were never any pecunia relations between us, on the one side or the other. never gave Madame Blavatsky money, whether by way loan or present; this I declare.

(3) Madame Jelihovsky, anxious as usual to dispute t indisputable, declares, in connexion with the widely-kno and curious fact that Madame Blavatsky gave herself out a widow in spite of the fact that her husband is alive a

[1] [In the original this letter of resignation is given in full. T sentence referred to is this: "2. Qu'elle a voulu profiter de mon n et m'a fait signer et publier le récit de (d'un ?) phénomene obte par fraude (le 'phénomène de la lettre') au mois de mai, 1884.' W. L.]

well to this day, that she had a right to do so. She was, it appears, "declared to be a widow by the authorities of Tiflis, in the certificate which they sent her in 1884. She is there spoken of as 'the widow of the actual Councillor of State, N. V. Blavatsky'. As she held no relations with him for more than twenty-five years, she had lost sight of him, and like the rest of us did not know if he were alive or dead. The fault lies with the Tiflis police, not with her."

But I have in my hands a lithographed *and attested* copy of this curious document, in which she is spoken of not as the widow, but as the *wife* of N. V. Blavatsky. It seems as though Madame Jelihovsky could say nothing without departing from the truth. How often has she herself laughed at the pretended widowhood of her famous sister!

(4) In reply to the assertion of the late Prof. Butleroff's nearest relations, that he was not acquainted with Madame Blavatsky, Madame Jelihovsky says that "she herself had seen in her hands a portrait and a letter of his". But she omits to say who had given the portrait, and to whom the letter was addressed. This she considers enough to overthrow the testimony of Prof. Butleroff's widow and his nearest friend.

(5) On p. 318, when speaking of the original of the "Confession" which I gave her to read, she says: "I was surprised to see that the Russian letter was all covered with the stamps of M. Jules Baissac. Mr. Solovyoff explained that this was done for the sake of attestation, to show that the translation was correct." How could I have talked such nonsense, when in fact there was only a single stamp on the letter?

(6) I once more ask Madame Jelihovsky publicly: "Where is the collection (*lettre sur lettre*) of my letters to Madame Blavatsky, which I am supposed to have written after October 8, 1886, at a time when she was repeatedly

complaining in black and white of my silence, and of wh Madame Jelihovsky talks with such assurance in her arti in the *Nouvelle Revue?*" They never existed; Mada Jelihovsky has invented them.

(7) In a letter to the *Novoe Vremya* Madame Jelihov apologises for a misprint in her article in the *Nouvelle Rev* But the fact is that on this "misprint" (1885 instead 1884) is founded her own account of the supposed marv at Würzburg, in this very article. Speaking of my meet with Madame Blavatsky at Würzburg, she writes: " dernier y eut la missive du Mahatma Koot Houmi repartit pour Paris, enthousiasmé de sa visite et des cho extraordinaires dont il avait été témoin à Wurtzbourg, à tel point qu'il écrivit lettre sur lettre, toutes dans le ge de celle-ci dont je fais des extraits: Paris, 8 Octobre, 188 etc. And in another place: "En l' année 1885, exemple, Mahatma Morya est apparu a M. Vsevol Solovioff, avec lequel il eut un entretien, que ce dernie décrit à beaucoup de personnes, avec son éloquen ordinaire". Now in the latter passage there may course have been a figure misprinted. But that is not wh I complain of. It is the statement about the meeting Würzburg. Here there is no misprint. How can there a misprinted figure? The date is correct. But there i most absolute falsehood, as the readers of *Isis* will see, elaborate perversion of a whole series of events. C Madame Jelihovsky have written thus in consequence "a misprint while her MS. was passing through the press I have three times pointed it out in print to Mada Jelihovsky, but she keeps silence, evidently regarding su things as trifles not worthy the attention of a self-respecti lady.

(8) Not knowing how to get out of the overwhelmi evidence of Madame Blavatsky's frauds in her "phenomen Madame Jelihovsky goes so far as to try to spread the id

that Madame Blavatsky's phenomena were actually treated by herself as "tricks" In that case, why did she perform them? Can a religious doctrine be proved by tricks? If these famous phenomena had been given out by Madame Blavatsky as mere tricks, instead of as marvels of the Mahatmas, men like Charles Richet and Flammarion would never have come to see and investigate; the London Society for Psychical Research would not have spent great sums of money,[1] sent Hodgson out to India and appointed a committee to inquire into the phenomena; nor would Sinnett have written whole volumes of description of these marvels, not tricks, on which is founded the external significance of Madame Blavatsky herself and her doctrine. The idea is too crude and absurd.

(9) One of the most curious points of Madame Jelihovsky's pamphlet is that she so innocently ignores the whole concluding part of the *Modern Priestess of Isis*, the documentary evidence of the foundation of the Theosophical Society. In these chapters it cannot be said that I am playing any part; the narrative goes back ten years before my acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky, and she herself tells the whole story in her letters to A. N. Aksákoff, letters which were handed to me in order that the truth of this interesting and important matter might be established. Madame Blavatsky was an actor on a public stage, she was a sort of historical character, and Madame Jelihovsky herself, though with some exaggeration, represents her career as one of immense and almost world-wide importance. Thus all that Madame Blavatsky has left behind her loses its private character, and is open to public criticism. Now this documentary narrative, founded solely

[1] [Prof. Sidgwick (at that time president) defrayed the expenses of Dr. Hodgson's journey. The subscribers to the Society for Psychical Research were put to no expense in the matter.]

upon her own autograph letters, the history of the ris the "universal brotherhood" founded by her, first appe in the *Modern Priestess of Isis*.

Why has Madame Jelihovsky not a word to say a this interesting account of the rise of the Theosop Society in America in the seventies, which was compl in the dark till I cast light upon it? The letters handed to me because they are a documentary testin of the truth of my narrative, and confirm the conclus which I had drawn at a time when I had no knowl whatever of the existence of these American let Madame Jelihovsky, in ignoring them, is like an os which hides its head under its wing, and thinks that no can see it.

IV.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY AND HER ADMISSION OF CRIMINALITY.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY says that I invented certain untr in reference to Madame Blavatsky's accusation that had made away with some property of their dece father. I would advise her to read carefully Mad Blavatsky's letter of 1875 given on p. 267;[1] she will no longer be able to say that I invented, when I gave out of friendship, an opportunity of disputing and crus what I then considered to be only a calumny and a slar But it appears that by my craft I brought her into a sta insanity in which she lost all power of reasoning; ar ended in this, that "when I was half out of my mind, my daughters had been brought to a state of indignatio

[1] "After his death there were stories about some mone had bequeathed to me and of which I never got half; and my you sister never writes to me at all."

my account, he was occupied in carefully watching and writing down everything that fell from our lips, taken in the worst construction, and exaggerated by our irritation". It appears, therefore, that she accuses her daughters as well as herself of perverting facts, or, in plain language, of *lying*. In this case I shall not dispute with Madame Jelihovsky.

However it seems from her narrative that it was only at St. Petersburg in the winter of 1885-6 that I "bewitched her and brought her to distraction," so that she made me her statements about Madame Blavatsky, "in the most exaggerated sense". At Paris, in the beginning of 1884, it would seem from her own words that she was in her right mind. How then about what she told me in the Parc Monceau? She now exclaims: "What a multitude of superfluous words Mr. Solovyoff has put in my mouth!" The following letter of October 27, 1884, will show that I have done nothing of the sort :—

"You remember our conversation in the Parc de Monceau? I could not then put the dots on many of the *i*'s, but I think I explained enough to show you that Helena and I had little in common. I love her and I pity her profoundly. I hope that she loves me too, but—it is in her own way. Apart from this feeling, which has often inclined me to be indulgent, and even to shut my eyes to much which inwardly troubled me, there is nothing but difference between us.

"I went to see her, at her expense, on the distinct understanding that not a word should be said about her cause and the society; subsequently this turned out to be impossible; I was drawn into the common whirlpool, and, to my great regret, I agreed to become a member of the society, so far as my conscience and religious convictions allowed it, and I even wrote accounts of what I heard and saw. . . . If my accounts contain inaccuracies, they are unintentional, and no fault of mine. But that is not the

question. Helena got angry with me, and ceased to w
to me, and as I see, accuses me of cruelty and ingratitu
I am very sorry. I say honestly, I am heartily sorry t
our relations should have been broken, perhaps for ev
but I cannot sacrifice my *conscience* even for them. I
not accuse her; what she asks me to do seems to he
trifle; to me it seems a *crime*. Perhaps we look differe
at things because I am a Christian, and she is—I know
what. She has been pressing me about this for a long ti
I cannot fulfil her wish, and I will not; because I c
sider it not only dishonourable for myself, but fatal for l
The same view of this question was taken by the late * *
the wisest man and the most thorough Christian I have e
known. He begged me on his death-bed not to yield
her demands, and to show her that above all she was ha
ing herself. And so I have done many a time; but with
success. X's great mistake is that she knows no bound
her pity for Helena. That is why she says that she is
only one who is kind to her and loves her. God gr
that this love may not lead to the ruin of both!

(Signed) "V. JELIHOVSKY

"*October* 27, 1884."

After a brief period of illusion, I expressed to Mada
Blavatsky both by word and letter my doubts as to
genuineness of some, if not all, of her phenomena, anc
the same time I expressed the same doubts and suspici
to other serious persons. Though I do not claim to b
man of science, I, like Charles Richet, and at the sa
place, was "seeking if there might not be some truth ar
many frauds". The inquiry, besides, was my plain busir
as member of the London Society for Psychical Resear
When my doubts and suspicions passed into full con
tion, and I obtained the indispensable support of vari
supplemental and documentary evidence, I exposed

theosophical frauds to those who were concerned, without fear of any unpleasant consequences for myself personally. Such was my line of action, clear and consistent, as is shown in my letters to Madame Blavatsky, her sister, and others, as well as in the letters of Madame Blavatsky, her sister, Charles Richet and others to myself.

In spite of all this, by picking out certain selected phrases, the real sense of which is explained by the circumstances I have narrated, and by the clear and logical consistency with them of my proved line of action, Madame Jelihovsky dares to insinuate that I was a sort of confederate of Madame Blavatsky, and was pursuing some secret and evil end. Once more driven to "distraction" by me, one must suppose, she asserts that she could prove this; "*but she has no clear proofs*".

In any case it is a strange confederate who conceals from no one his doubts and suspicions, and when he is finally convinced of fraud, exposes it, and thus subjects himself to all sorts of great annoyances and the vengeance of the charlatans whom he has unmasked.

But what shall we say of this same Madame Jelihovsky, who after this letter of 1884 has since become a panegyrist of Madame Blavatsky, and declares that hers is a "mighty cause" and that her theosophy is "a pure and lofty doctrine"? She was once in error, it seems, but now adores the sanctity of her sister and her doctrine. But, then, what was the "crime" which Madame Blavatsky required of her sisterly affection? What was the "dishonourable" request "against her conscience" that she made? The recognition of "crime," of "dishonour" and "moral ruin" may be difficult for a child, but not for a woman rich in experience of life, as Madame Jelihovsky was even in 1884. And then * * * the true Christian and wise man, who begged her on his death-bed not to yield to Madame Blavatsky's prayers; he can hardly

have been mistaken in his view of the matter. It is clear that the matter was not trivial, but serious; and that is why between Madame Blavatsky and her sister, apart from the love which "led her to shut her eyes to a great deal," there was nothing but difference.

It was only in May, 1886, at Elberfeld, that an unexpected and complete agreement between them came about. They evidently, to their mutual satisfaction, came to a thorough understanding. Madame Jelihovsky is probably carrying out this understanding by doing all in her power to spread the fame of Madame Blavatsky in Russia, not as an able writer but as the foundress of the Theosophical Society, as the apostle of a lofty and pure doctrine, the "new revelation received from the Mahatmas of Thibet".

V.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY hovers awkwardly near the line which divides legal impunity from criminal responsibility in what she writes about the French translation of Madame Blavatsky's "Confession," witnessed by the sworn interpreter. She accuses me of falsifying the document. It will be seen later on, from the written statement of the witness selected by Madame Jelihovsky herself and appealed to in her pamphlet, that she was in the habit of narrating the very details of the falsification which I was supposed to have been guilty of. She does not in her pamphlet give the details, but that does not alter the question. Her statements remain clear enough. There can be no question of any "carelessness" or "error of translation" on my part. Whether the translation was made by myself or another is indifferent, when once the stamp of the sworn interpreter and his attestation have been duly affixed to original and translation. It is not the translator but the sworn interpreter who is responsible for the accuracy of the translation,

and of every phrase of it. This responsibility is great in the eyes of the law in every land. Translations tested, stamped and witnessed by Jules Baissac, the sworn interpreter of the Paris Court of Appeal, a well-known linguist acquainted with Russian, *cannot be false.*

If in such a translation an essential phrase is omitted, it cannot be supposed that it was cancelled in the original, for in that case the interpreter would have noted it. Either the translation therefore must have been made from a falsified original, or this phrase must have been suppressed after the attestation. A third possible supposition is that to the genuine original, and a false translation, have been appended falsified stamps and a forged attestation; and, as will be seen from Colonel Brusiloff's letter, this is the line which was taken by Madame Jelihovsky.

In all three cases there can be no doubt that if the translation is untrustworthy, this untrustworthiness can only be due to deliberate falsification. It is, therefore, of deliberate falsification that Madame Jelihovsky accuses me when she asserts that the translation is untrustworthy.

Her subsequent attempts to keep herself clear, such as her sudden transition from assertion to supposition, cannot alter the fact. Once she has published the words, that she asserts the untrustworthiness of the translation, I stand publicly accused of deliberate falsification.

Now what could I have done, had it happened that Madame M., in whose keeping the documents were in Paris, had destroyed them, thinking that the matter was past and gone, and that they were of no further use?

Happily, Madame M. kept the documents, and sent them to me in the beginning of 1892. Madame Jelihovsky declares that in the summer of 1892, in Paris, she was refused a sight of the translation attested by Baissac, and triumphantly exclaims: "Where is it?"

I reply: "*It is here*, ready for expert examination";

and, of course, there stands in it, in its proper place, the phrase which Madame Jelihovsky declares it does not contain: *Je vais mentir, horriblement mentir, et on me croira facilement.* The phrase comes on the very half-sheet on which Baissac wrote his attestation and affixed his official seal. It was not that they would not, but that they simply could not, show this translation to Madame Jelihovsky in Paris in the summer of 1892, because it had already been sent to me, with other documents. Had I known that she was going to Paris to inspect it, I would have shown it to her before witnesses in St. Petersburg.

But Madame Jelihovsky, as the proverb says, "without finding out the ford, plunges into the water"; she could not see the documents in Paris, so, we must suppose, she imagined that they were destroyed. It is only this supposition which can explain the daring with which she has ventured publicly to accuse me of falsification.

How did the defenders of Madame Blavatsky get it into their heads that it was in the "Confession" that there came the *direct* denial of the Mahatmas? I think it must have been a deliberate entanglement and embroilment of Madame Blavatsky's. She well knew how to make an artistic tangle, so that people got their heads muddled till they did not know what they were saying or thinking. Any one who has known her and seen her at work will be able to imagine how the thing was done.

The Parisian theosophists were convinced that she had invented the "Mahatmas who ran her errands," because they believed my written statement of the Würzburg conversations, admirably confirmed and illustrated as it was both by the "Confession" and by the subsequent letters from her, which were also translated and attested by Baissac. A particularly deep impression was made by the letter beginning with the words: "What have I done to you?" and containing the phrases: "If I were hanged for it, I

would not have *betrayed you* nor any one else; even if I knew it to be *true*, I would have held my tongue".

But more interesting than all this embroilment, this malicious embroilment at my expense, is the question, Why did not Madame Blavatsky's defenders, and Madame Jelihovsky at their head, appear in Paris in the summer of 1886, instead of crying out about falsification and the rest? All the documents were there, and Madame M. and Baissac were to be seen. Madame Jelihovsky informed me then that she was coming to Paris to see the documents, but she never came. Why did she not come? If the whole question hung on the point as to whether the translation contained the words, *Je vais mentir, horriblement mentir*, or not, she could have come and inquired, and learned the truth.

But the fact is that the last thing they wished to learn was the truth. Their cue was to sit still at Elberfeld, to cry out and accuse me of falsification, and to make out that Madame Blavatsky was my innocent victim. They did not stop before inventing the most incredible details of the supposed falsification.

And I took my own course; I left the attested documents at Paris to be seen by those who would; I left for Russia, and only tried to forget all this abomination, charlatanism and deceit; and it was only in December, 1891, that I learnt from Madame Jelihovsky's words to Colonel Brusiloff, and afterwards face to face from herself, all the detestable accusations they had brought against me, and all the depths of the theosophical vengeance.

VI.

[Mr. Solovyoff quotes a letter of Madame Jelihovsky's, dated July 14, 1886, and therefore after her return from

Elberfeld, in which she begs him to resume his frien relations with herself and her family.]

And this was written after she had, as she stated print, been convinced at Elberfeld of my fraudulent d ing with the documents, and of various "falsehoods" mine which had driven her to distraction!

Madame Jelihovsky goes yet farther. She rises t dark hint about something yet darker in my past. Th may have been in my past a great personal sorrow, c bined with family and other troubles; there may have be in Madame Jelihovsky's words, "romantic details"; b thank God, there is nothing for which I need blush or ashamed, nothing that can in any way touch my hon Against nameless calumnies and slanders, which I am aware of, or which have reached me only in the form vague rumours, I of course, like any one else, am helples

But let me be told, not in anonymous letters—I h received such—but face to face, and with the autho declared, who is it that accuses me, and of what I accused that is inconsistent with honour and probity; then I am sure that I shall be able to bring proofs of falsehood of the accusation as clear as those which I h given in these pages to refute the supposed falsificat and other villainies, great and small, which Madame Jelih sky has invented.

Madame Jelihovsky has not defended the memor Madame Blavatsky; if it were not a matter of public terest, and if this affectionate sister had not herself exto it, no one would have attacked her memory. She has c finally blackened her sister's name, and in her help malice does not herself see what she has done.

VII.

MADAME JELIHOVSKY quotes my teasing letter [B] Madame Blavatsky, of October 8, 1885, the bantering t

of which was perfectly understood by Madame Blavatsky, as it is by any *attentive* reader; and on this she founds the most terrible accusations. I have already analysed and explained this letter in detail. Why, what and how I spoke to Madame Adam and Charles Richet the reader already knows. I invented and imagined nothing; I was only malicious within the limits of fact. Was this such a crime on my part—that I should have a malicious laugh at Madame Blavatsky—after all the marvels of Würzburg, and the tricks she had played me? I hope impartial and sensible men will not bring in a verdict of guilty against me for this! Madame Blavatsky, though naïve at times, was acute; she could not possibly take seriously what I said about converting to theosophy some, in Madame Jelihovsky's phrase, of the progressive personages in Europe. Madame Blavatsky well knew that I did not joke with serious people, as I always used to joke with her and her colleagues; for which reason I received from her from the first, both in conversation and by letter, the nicknames of the "suspecter," "unbelieving Thomas" and "Mephistopheles". She could not, I repeat, possibly mistake the meaning of my letter; and if she afterwards showed it to any one as a serious letter, this was only a feint, as is clear from all the circumstances.

But Madame Jelihovsky rhetorically exclaims that people of European fame, like Madame Adam and Charles Richet, "can at any moment ask me, through the press, how I dared deceive them". I do not think that Madame Adam will ever ask me the question; but if she does, and the question comes to my knowledge, I will answer her in detail, and will publish my interview with her; old though it is, it has not lost its interest.

As for Charles Richet, here is his own letter, which will show how far I deceived him, and will at the same time

reply to the inventions published by Madame Jelihovsky in the *Russkoe Obozrenie* [see p. 28].

"*Dimanche, Mars* 12, 1893.

"CHER MONSIEUR SOLOVYOFF,

"Je suis tout prêt à vous fournir sur Madame Blavatsky tous les renseignements que vous jugerez nécessaires, et que je pourrai vous donner.

"Je l'ai connue à Paris en 1884, par l'entremise de Madame de Barrau; et je n'ai jamais été ni de ses intimes ni de ses amis. Je l'ai vue en tout deux fois certainement, et peut être trois fois, peut être même quatre fois; mais à coup sûr ce n'est pas plus de quatre fois. Ce n'est pas ce qu'on peut appeler, en langue française, de l'intimité. J'étais—et je le suis encore—curieux de tout ce qui peut nous éclairer sur l'avenir de l'homme et les forces occultes, je ne savais—et je ne sais pas encore—si elles existent, ces forces occultes, mais je pense que le devoir d'un savant est de chercher même là s'il y a quelque vérité cachée au fond de beaucoup d'impostures. Lorsque je vous ai vu, vous m'avez dit—'réservez votre jugement, elle m'a montré des choses qui me paraissent très étonnantes, mon opinion n'est pas faite encore, mais je crois bien que c'est une femme extraordinaire, douée de propriétés exceptionelles. Attendez, et je vous donnerai de plus amples explications.'

"J'ai attendu, et vos explications ont été assez conformes à ce que je supposai tout d'abord, à savoir que c' était sans doute une mystificatrice, très intelligente assurément, mais dont la bonne foi était douteuse.

"Alors sont arrivées les discussions que la Société des Récherches Psychiques anglaise a publiées (Coulomb et Hodgson) et ce doute n'a plus été possible.

"Cette histoire ne parait fort simple. Elle était habile, adroite; faisait des jongleries ingénieuses, et elle nous a au premier abord tous déroutés.

"Mais je mets au défi qu' on cite une ligne de moi—imprimée ou manuscrite—qui témoigne d'autre chose que d'un doute immense et d'une réserve prudente.

"À vrai dire, je n'ai jamais cru sérieusement à son pouvoir ; car en fait d'expériences, la seule vraie constatation que je puisse admettre, elle ne m'a jamais rien montré de démonstratif. Quant à ce *tout Paris* qui l'a adulée, c'est une bien sotte légende : il n'y avait, pour lui rendre visite, que cinq ou six de mes amis, alors fort jeunes, et qui appartenaient plutôt à des groupes d'étudiants qu'a des groupes de savants ; nous n'avons été, ni les uns ni les autres, séduits par le peu de soi-disant phénomènes, qu'elle nous a montré.

"Voilà, cher Monsieur Solovyoff, tout ce dont je me souviens avec précision. Faites de ma lettre ce que vous voudrez, je me fie entièrement à vous.

"Croyez moi, je vous prie, votre bien affectionné,

"CHARLES RICHET."

(1) Madame Jelihovsky categorically denies, and calls a "fable," all that I say about an agreement between herself and me, that she should publish nothing in Russia about Madame Blavatsky's theosophical career or her phenomena, with the object of attracting attention to this materialistic doctrine ; and that so long only as she kept this agreement would I undertake not to publish what I knew about Madame Blavatsky and her society.

(2) Madame Jelihovsky says that in December, 1891, I sent her the portrait of Madame Blavatsky which I had found among my papers, with a proposal that she should return me my letters to her and to her sister (in case she had such in her possession) in exchange for Madame Jelihovsky's letters to myself. "I replied," she writes, "that I would not give him the letters." And further on : "He proposed to be bought off from all personal attacks on

myself, at the price of the return to him of his correspondence with my family; but I myself refused to buy him off".

Let the answer to these statements, and to something yet more serious, be found in the following letter of Colonel A. A. Brusiloff, to whom Madame Jelihovsky herself refers, as our intermediary and witness:—

"DEAR MR. VSEVOLOD SERGYEEVICH,

"In consequence of the appearance of the pamphlet, *H. P. Blavatsky and a Modern Priest of Truth*, I, at your wish, feel it my duty to speak in writing about the negotiations which I carried on between Madame Jelihovsky and yourself, and about your conversation with her at my house and in my presence.

"At the beginning of December, 1891, in consequence of Madame Jelihovsky's article about Madame Blavatsky in the November number of the *Russkoe Obozrenie*, you, knowing that I am acquainted with Madame Jelihovsky's family and used to visit them, asked me to speak to her and try to persuade her not to continue the publication of her sister's biography, on the ground that you did not wish to cause Madame Jelihovsky any annoyance, in consideration of your former friendship with her. But if she continued to write in the same tone about Madame Blavatsky, you would consider yourself bound in conscience to refute her by facts. You asked me to remind her of your agreement that there should be no writing on either part about Madame Blavatsky as the founder of a new doctrine and the apostle of theosophy. You finally expressed a wish to meet her on neutral ground, in order to settle the question.

"I called on Madame Jelihovsky the same evening and performed your commission. She replied that she could not understand why you should so take to heart her article in the *Russkoe Obozrenie*, which, in her opinion, could do

no harm; and she agreed to meet you in a few days, when she should have recovered from her indisposition, on condition that, if you would not call upon her, you should meet her at my house and in my presence. To this I agreed.

"Madame Jelihovsky also asked me to tell you that she had not written a word about you, as she did not wish to mention you; but that all the same she could give you great annoyance by announcing that the theosophists had in their possession a formal declaration, given by Jules Baissac, the sworn interpreter in Paris, saying that he had refused to attest the translations of Madame Blavatsky's letters to you on account of their incorrectness, and that the letters were evidently falsified; and that the stamps, as the theosophists supposed, must have been affixed by yourself at a moment when Baissac was out of the room. She asked me to transmit you this information, as well as many other views of hers about your mutual relations. I proposed that she should set out in writing all that she wished communicated to you, and when I received the letter given in her pamphlet, I gave it to you to read.

"Your meeting took place in the middle of December at my house and in my presence. The day before, Madame Jelihovsky's daughter, Nadejda Vladimirovna, expressed a wish to be present also at the meeting, of which I informed you. To this you did not agree, as you did not think it proper, in view of the ticklish turn the conversation might take, to speak openly to the mother in the presence of her daughter.

"At the beginning of your interview Madame Jelihovsky was very angry, but she afterwards quieted down, and you carried on the conversation calmly. Of this conversation I distinctly remember what follows. You reminded Madame Jelihovsky of the circumstances which led to your mutual agreement to publish nothing in Russia about Madame

Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society, and this time Vera Petrovna did not deny the agreement, but said that her articles about her sister were written in a tone which did not violate the terms of the agreement; you were, however, of a different opinion. You then begged her to put an end to her propaganda of her sister's life and doctrine, and not to publish a second article in the *Russkoe Obozrenie.* To this Madame Jelihovsky replied that this was now, to her great regret, quite impossible, as the next number was already in print, and she could not help it. You thirdly asked her what were the forged letters and falsified documents about which she had spoken to me, and she confirmed to you all that I have said above. To this you replied that you would write to Baissac, and would not leave such a calumny without documentary contradiction. Finally you proposed an exchange of private letters dealing solely with family matters, both your own and hers; to this Vera Petrovna at once agreed, saying: "By all means, with pleasure" At the same time she advised you to publish nothing about Madame Blavatsky, as her followers, relations and friends were influential, and would cause you serious annoyance. You answered that you would do your duty, come what might.

"There was no mention of a return of your letters to Madame Blavatsky and *vice versâ.* After agreeing to the exchange of private letters, you separated, and Madame Jelihovsky soon left.

"I can further add that it was at your own wish, not at Madame Jelihovsky's, as she asserts in her pamphlet, that the exchange of letters did not take place. You gave as the reason for your refusal the possibility that all the letters might not have been preserved, and that this might give rise to misunderstanding between you.

"The portrait of Madame Blavatsky was handed by me to Madame Jelihovsky long before the appearance of her

first article in the *Russkoe Obozrenie*, and there was at that time no question of an interchange of letters. This I write because in the above-named pamphlet my share in the negotiations between you is not explained by Madame Jelihovsky in a way entirely consonant with facts.

"I undertook the mediation in the negotiations between you and Madame Jelihovsky in the hope that I might help in making peace, or, at least, in bringing about some mutual agreement; but the attempt unfortunately failed, as I have already explained.

"You can use this letter as you think fit.

"Accept the assurance of my sincere respect and devotion.

"A. BRUSILOFF."

Statement by Jules Baissac, sworn interpreter in the Paris Court of Appeal:—

"PARIS, *Janvier* 8, 1892.

"C'est bien moi et moi-même qui ai apposé ma signature et mon cachet d'office aux traductions que m'a soumises dans le temps Mr. Solovyoff de lettres en langue Russe de Madame Blavatsky, comme c'est moi aussi qui ai timbré ces lettres. Il est faux, absolument faux, que Mr. Solovyoff ait profité, comme on l'aurait dit, d'un moment ou j'étais absent de mon bureau pour appliquer lui-même ce cachet.

"Mon timbre sur les originaux quelconques n'a point pour objet de les authentiquer, mais d'établir que ce sont bien les pièces sur lesquelles ont été faites les traductions approuvées et scellées par moi. Or, je le répète, c'est bien moi qui ai mis mon timbre sur les traductions dont il s'agit, ainsi que sur les textes originaux.

"J. BAISSAC.

"*P.S.*—Il est fort inutile d'ajouter, après ce que je viens de dire, que je n'ai jamais dit ni écrit à personne quoique ce

soit qui puisse faire croire le contraire de ce que j'affirme ici ; *ni dit, ni écrit.*

"J. BAISSAC."

To this letter is affixed the official stamp bearing the words: "J. Baissac, interprète juré près la cour d'Appel, Paris".

This, I think, is enough; it is time to end. Madame Jelihovsky has repeatedly and cruelly punished herself by her own pamphlet. Her way of falling into a "state of distraction" and taking no account of her words has led her too far. She is not forbidden to leave the path of truth, even in print. But a whole series of published slanders, refuted by indisputable evidence, is really too much. On what does Madame Jelihovsky reckon? Evidently only on the fact that she is a woman. Her calculation is correct. I shall not yet attempt to prosecute her. Let us hope she will give up.

I leave the matter to the judgment of all impartial and honourable persons.

APPENDIX C.

THE SOURCES OF MADAME BLAVATSKY'S WRITINGS.

By WM. EMMETTE COLEMAN.[1]

During the past three years I have made a more or less exhaustive analysis of the contents of the writings of Madame H. P. Blavatsky; and I have traced the sources whence she derived—and mostly without credit being given—nearly the whole of their subject-matter. The presentation, in detail, of the evidences of this derivation would constitute a volume; but the limitations of this paper will admit only of a brief summary of the results attained by my analysis of these writings. The detailed proofs and evidence of every assertion herein are now partly in print and partly in manuscript; and they will be embodied in full in a work I am preparing for publication,—an *exposé* of theosophy as a whole. So far as pertains to *Isis Unveiled*, Madame Blavatsky's first work, the proofs of its wholesale plagiarisms have been in print two years, and no attempt has been made to deny or discredit any of the data therein contained. In that portion of my work which is already in print, as

[1] Member, American Oriental Society, Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Pali Text Society, Egypt Exploration Fund, Geographical Society of California; Corresponding Member, Brooklyn Ethical Association; and Member, Advisory Council, Psychic Science Congress, Chicago, Illinois.

well as in that as yet in manuscript, many parallel passages are given from the two sets of writings,—the works of Madame Blavatsky, and the books whence she copied the plagiarised passages; they also contain complete lists of the passages plagiarised, giving in each case the page of Madame Blavatsky's work in which the passage is found, and the page and name of the book whence she copied it. Any one can, therefore, easily test the accuracy of my statements.

In *Isis Unveiled*, published in 1877, I discovered some 2000 passages copied from other books without proper credit. By careful analysis I found that in compiling *Isis* about 100 books were used. About 1400 books are quoted from and referred to in this work; but, from the 100 books which its author possessed, she copied everything in *Isis* taken from and relating to the other 1300. There are in *Isis* about 2100 quotations from and references to books that were copied, at second-hand, from books other than the originals; and of this number only about 140 are credited to the books from which Madame Blavatsky copied them at second-hand. The others are quoted in such a manner as to lead the reader to think that Madame Blavatsky had read and utilised the original works, and had quoted from them at first-hand,—the truth being that these originals had evidently never been read by Madame Blavatsky. By this means many readers of *Isis*, and subsequently those of her *Secret Doctrine* and *Theosophical Glossary*, have been misled into thinking Madame Blavatsky an enormous reader, possessed of vast erudition; while the fact is her reading was very limited, and her ignorance was profound in all branches of knowledge.

The books utilised in compiling *Isis* were nearly all current nineteenth-century literature. Only one of the old and rare books named and quoted from was in Madame Blavatsky's possession,—Henry More's *Immortality of the Soul*, published in the seventeenth century. One or two

others dated from the early part of the present century; and all the rest pertained to the middle and later part of this century. Our author made great pretensions to Cabbalistic learning; but every quotation from and every allusion to the Cabbala, in *Isis* and all her later works, were copied at second-hand from certain books containing scattered quotations from Cabbalistic writings; among them being Mackenzie's *Masonic Cyclopœdia*, King's *Gnostics*, and the works of S. F. Dunlap, L. Jacolliot, and Eliphas Levi. Not a line of the quotations in *Isis*, from the old-time mystics, Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Cardan, Robert Fludd, Philalethes, Gaffarel, and others, was taken from the original works; the whole of them were copied from other books containing scattered quotations from those writers. The same thing obtains with her quotations from Josephus, Philo, and the Church Fathers, as Justin Martyr, Origen, Clement, Irenæus, Tertullian, Eusebius, and all the rest. The same holds good with the classical authors, —Homer, Ovid, Horace, Virgil, Plato, Pliny, and many others. The quotations from all these were copied at second-hand from some of the 100 books which were used by the compiler of *Isis*.

In a number of instances Madame Blavatsky, in *Isis*, claimed to possess or to have read certain books quoted from, which it is evident she neither possessed nor had read. In *Isis*, i., 369-377, are a number of quotations from a work of Figuier's, that she claimed to have taken from the original work, which she says (i., 369) now "lies before us". As every word from Figuier in *Isis* was copied from Des Mousseaux's *Magie au Dix-neuvième Siècle*, pp. 451-457, the word "lies" in the sentence used by her is quite *à propos*. In *Isis*, i., 353, 354, *et seq.*, she professed to quote from a work in her possession, whereas all that she quoted was copied from *Demonologia*, pp. 224-259. In ii., 8, she claimed that she had read a work by Bellarmin, whereas

all that she says about him, and all that she quotes fr him, are copied from *Demonologia*, pp. 294, 295. In 71, she stated that she had a treatise by De Nogen, but that she knows about him or his treatise was taken fr *Demonologia*, p. 431. In ii., 74, 75, the reader is led believe that certain quotations from *The Golden Leg* were copied by her from the original; the truth being t they were taken from *Demonologia*, 420-427. In ii., she gave a description of a standard of the Inquisiti derived, she said, from "a photograph in our possessi from an original procured at the Escurial of Madrid"; t this description was copied from *Demonologia*, p. 300.

In *Isis*, i., pp. xii. to xxii., is an account of the philosop of Plato and his successors. Nearly the whole of these pages was copied from two books,—Cocker's *Christian and Greek Philosophy*, and Zeller's *Plato and the Academy*. There are some 25 passages from Cocker a 35 from Zeller; and, of all these, credit is given for t one citation from Cocker and about a dozen lines fr Zeller. In *Isis*, ii., 344, 345, 9 passages are copied fr Zeller, but one of which is credited.

Here follows a list of some other of the more extens plagiarisms in *Isis*. It includes the names of the bo plagiarised from, and the number of passages in th that were plagiarised :—

Ennemoser's *History of Magic*, English translation,	107	passa
Demonologia,	85	,,
Dunlap's *Sod: the Son of the Man*,	134	,,
Dunlap's *Sod: the Mysteries of Adoni*,	65	,,
Dunlap's *Spirit History of Man*,	77	,,
Salverte's *Philosophy of Magic*, English translation,	68	,,
Des Mousseaux's *Magie au Dix-neuvième Siècle*,	63	,,
Des Mousseaux's *Hauts Phénomènes de la Magie*,	45	,,
Des Mousseaux's *Mœurs et Pratiques des Demons*,	16	,,
Supernatural Religion,	40	,,
King's *Gnostics*, 1st edition,	42	,,

Mackenzie's *Masonic Cyclopædia*,	36 passages.
Jacolliot's *Christna et le Christ*,	23 ,,
Jacolliot's *Bible in India*, English translation,	17 ,,
Jacolliot's *Le Spiritisme dans le Monde*,	19 ,,
Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*,	27 ,,
Cory's *Ancient Fragments*,	20 ,,
Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*,	20 ,,

Among the other books plagiarised from may be named Eliphas Levi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, and his *La Science des Esprits*, *La Clef des Grands Mystères*, and *Histoire de la Magie;* Amberley's *Analysis of Religious Belief*, Yule's *Ser Marco Polo*, Max Müller's *Chips*, vols. i. and ii., Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*, Taylor's *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (1875 ed.), Reber's *Christ of Paul*, Jennings's *Rosicrucians*, Higgins's *Anacalypsis*, Inman's *Ancient Faiths in Ancient Names*, Inman's *Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism*, Inman's *Ancient Faiths and Modern*, Wright's *Sorcery and Witchcraft*, Bunsen's *Egypt*, Payne Knight's *Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology*, Westropp and Wake's *Ancient Symbol Worship*, Pococke's *India in Greece*, Findel's *History of Freemasonry*, *The Unseen Universe*, Elam's *A Physician's Problems*, Emma Hardinge's *Modern American Spiritualism*, More's *Immortality of the Soul*, Draper's *Conflict between Religion and Science*, Randolph's *Pre-Adamite Man*, Peebles's *Jesus: Myth, Man, or God*, Peebles's *Around the World*, *Principles of the Jesuits* (1839), *Septenary Institutions* (1850), Gasparin's *Science and Spiritualism*, *Report on Spiritualism of the London Dialectical Society* (1873), Wallace's *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, and Maudsley's *Body and Mind*.

Two years ago I published the statement that the whole of *Isis* was compiled from a little over 100 books and periodicals. In the *Theosophist*, April, 1893, pp. 387, 388, Colonel Olcott states that when *Isis* was written the library

of the author comprised about 100 books, and that during its composition various friends lent her a few books,—the latter with her own library thus making up a little over 100, in precise accordance with the well-established results of my critical analysis of every quotation and plagiarism in *Isis*.

The *Secret Doctrine*, published in 1888, is of a piece with *Isis*. It is permeated with plagiarisms, and is in all its parts a rehash of other books. Two books very largely form the basis of this work,—Wilson's translation of the *Vishnu Purana*, and Prof. Winchell's *World Life*. The *Secret Doctrine* is saturated with Hinduism and Sanskrit terminology, and the bulk of this was copied from Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*. A large part of the work is devoted to the discussion of various points in modern science, and the work most largely used by Madame Blavatsky in this department of her book was Winchell's *World Life*. A specimen of the wholesale plagiarisms in this book appears in vol. ii., pp. 599-603. Nearly the whole of four pages was copied from Oliver's *Pythagorean Triangle*, while only a few lines were credited to that work. Considerable other matter in *Secret Doctrine* was copied, uncredited, from Oliver's work. Donnelly's *Atlantis* was largely plagiarised from. Madame Blavatsky not only borrowed from this writer the general idea of the derivation of Eastern civilisation, mythology, etc., from *Atlantis;* but she coolly appropriated from him a number of the alleged detailed evidences of this derivation, without crediting him therewith. Vol. ii., pp. 790-793, contains a number of facts, numbered *seriatim*, said to prove this Atlantean derivation. These facts were almost wholly copied from Donnelly's book, ch. iv., where they are also numbered *seriatim;* but there is no intimation in *Secret Doctrine* that its author was indebted to Donnelly's book for this mass of matter. In addition to those credited, there are 130 passages from Wilson's *Vishnu Purana* copied uncredited; and there are some 70 passages

from Winchell's *World Life* not credited. From Dowson's *Hindu Classical Dictionary*, 123 passages were plagiarised. From Decharme's *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique*, about 60 passages were plagiarised; and from Myer's *Qabbala*, 34. These are some of the other books plagiarised from: Kenealy's *Book of God*, Faber's *Cabiri*, Wake's *Great Pyramid*, Gould's *Mythical Monsters*, Joly's *Man before Metals*, Stallo's *Modern Physics*, Massey's *Natural Genesis*, Mackey's *Mythological Astronomy*, Schmidt's *Descent and Darwinism*, Quatrefages's *Human Species*, Laing's *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, Mather's *Cabbala Unveiled*, Maspéro's *Musée de Boulaq*, Ragon's *Maçonnerie Occulte*, Lefevre's *Philosophy*, and Büchner's *Force and Matter*.

The *Secret Doctrine* is ostensibly based upon certain stanzas, claimed to have been translated by Madame Blavatsky from the *Book of Dzyan*,—the oldest book in the world, written in a language unknown to philology. The *Book of Dzyan* was the work of Madame Blavatsky,—a compilation, in her own language, from a variety of sources, embracing the general principles of the doctrines and dogmas taught in the *Secret Doctrine*. I find in this "oldest book in the world" statements copied from nineteenth-century books, and in the usual blundering manner of Madame Blavatsky. Letters and other writings of the adepts are found in the *Secret Doctrine*. In these Mahatmic productions I have traced various plagiarised passages from Wilson's *Vishnu Purana* and Winchell's *World Life*, —of like character to those in Madame Blavatsky's acknowledged writings. Detailed proofs of this will be given in my book. I have also traced the source whence she derived the word *Dzyan*.

The *Theosophical Glossary*, published in 1892, contains an alphabetical arrangement of words and terms pertaining to occultism and theosophy, with explanations and definitions thereof. The whole of this book, except the garblings,

distortions and fabrications of Madame Blavatsky scattered through it, was copied from other books. The explanations and definitions of 425 names and terms were copied from Dowson's *Hindu Classical Dictionary*. From Wilson's *Vishnu Purana* were taken those of 242 terms; from Eitel's *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism*, 179; and from Mackenzie's *Masonic Cyclopædia*, 164. A modicum of credit was given to these four books in the preface. But, inasmuch as, scattered through the *Glossary*, credit was given at intervals to these books for a certain few of the passages extracted therefrom, its readers might easily be misled, by the remark in the preface relative to these four books, into the belief that said remark was intended to cover the various passages in the *Glossary* where these books are named as the sources whence they were derived and these alone,—that the passages duly credited to said books comprised the whole of the matter in the volume taken from them, instead of being but a small part of the immense collection of matter transferred *en masse* to the *Glossary*. But the four named in the preface are not the only books thus utilised. A glossary of Sanskrit and occultic terms was appended to a work called *Five Years of Theosophy*, published by Mohini M. Chatterji in 1885. At least 229 of these terms and their definitions were copied in Blavatsky's *Glossary*, nearly *verbatim* in every instance; and no credit whatever was given for this wholesale appropriation of another's work. I cannot find a single reference to Chatterji's glossary in any part of the later *Glossary*. Nearly all of the matter concerning Egyptian mythology, etc., in the latter, was copied from Bonwick's *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*. A small part of this was credited, but over 100 passages from Bonwick were not credited. Nearly every word in relation to Norse and Teutonic mythology was copied from Wagner's *Asgard and the Gods*,—a little being credited, and some 100 passages not. Most of the Thibetan matter was taken

from Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*,—some credited, but nearly 50 passages were not. Much of the material anent Southern Buddhism was copied from Spence Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*,—nearly 50 passages being uncredited. Most of the Babylonian and Chaldean material was extracted from Smith's *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, with nearly 50 passages not credited. The Parsi and Zoroastrian matter was from Darmesteter's translation of the *Zend-Avesta*, and West's translation of the *Bundahish* in the *Sacred Books of the East*,—mostly uncredited. Among other books levied upon in the compilation of the *Glossary*, principally with no credit given, are these: Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, Myer's *Qabbala*, Hartmann's *Paracelsus*, Crawford's translation of the *Kalevala*, King's *Gnostics*, Faber's *Cabiri*, Beal's *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures*, Rhys Davids's *Buddhism*, Edkins's *Chinese Buddhism*, Maspéro's *Guide au Musée de Boulaq*, Subba Row's *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita*, Kenealy's *Book of God*, Eliphas Levi's *Works*, and various others.

The *Voice of the Silence*, published in 1889, purports to be a translation by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from a Thibetan work. It is said to belong to the same series as the *Book of Dzyan*, which is true; as, like that work, it is a compilation of ideas and terminology from various nineteenth-century books, the diction and phraseology being those of Madame Blavatsky. I have traced the sources whence it was taken, and it is a hotch-potch from Brahmanical books on Yoga and other Hindu writings; Southern Buddhistic books, from the Páli and Sinhalese; and Northern Buddhistic writings, from the Chinese and Thibetan,—the whole having been taken by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from translations by, and the writings of, European and other Orientalists of to-day. In this work are intermingled Sanskrit, Páli, Thibetan, Chinese, and Sinhalese terms,—a manifest absurdity in a Thibetan work. I have

traced the books from which each of these terms was taken. I find embedded in the text of this alleged ancient Thibetan work quotations, phrases, and terms copied from current Oriental literature. The books most utilised in its compilation are these: Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*, Edkins's *Chinese Buddhism*, Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, Rhys Davids's *Buddhism*, Dvivedi's *Raja Yoga*, and *Raja Yoga Philosophy* (1888); also an article, "The Dream of Ravan," published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, January, 1854, extracts from which appeared in the *Theosophist* of January, 1880. Passages from this article, and from the books named above, are scattered about in the text of the *Voice of the Silence*, as well as in the annotations thereon, which latter are admitted to be the work of Blavatsky. Full proofs of this, including the parallel passages, will be given in my work on theosophy; including evidence that this old Thibetan book contains not only passages from the Hindu books quoted in the article in the *Dublin Magazine*, but also ideas and phrases stolen from the nineteenth-century writer of said article. One example of the incongruity of the elements composing the conglomerate admixture of terms and ideas in the *Voice of the Silence* will be given. On p. 87, it is said that the Narjols of the Northern Buddhists are "learned in Gótrabhu-gnyána and gnyána-dassana-suddhi" Helena Petrovna Blavatsky copied these two terms from Hardy's *Eastern Monachism*, p. 281. The terms used in Northern Buddhism are usually Sanskrit, or from the Sanskrit; those in Southern Buddhism, Páli, or from the Páli. Hardy's work, devoted to Sinhalese Buddhism, is composed of translations from Sinhalese books, and its terms and phrases are largely Sinhalese corruptions of the Páli. Sinhalese terms are unknown in Northern Buddhism. The two terms in the *Voice of the Silence*, descriptive of the wisdom of the Narjols, are Sinhalese-Páli corruptions, and therefore

unknown in Thibet. Narjol is a word manufactured by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, from the Thibetan Nal-jor, which she found in Schlagintweit's work, p. 138,—the *r* and *l* being transposed by her.

Esoteric Buddhism, by A. P. Sinnett, was based upon statements in letters received by Mr. Sinnett and Mr. A. O. Hume, through Madame Blavatsky, purporting to be written by the Mahatmas Koot Hoomi and Morya,—principally the former. Mr. Richard Hodgson has kindly lent me a considerable number of the original letters of the Mahatmas leading to the production of *Esoteric Buddhism*. I find in them overwhelming evidence that all of them were written by Madame Blavatsky, which evidence will be presented in full in my book. In these letters are a number of extracts from Buddhist books, alleged to be translations from the originals by the Mahatmic writers themselves. These letters claim for the adepts a knowledge of Sanskrit, Thibetan, Páli and Chinese. I have traced to its source each quotation from the Buddhist scriptures in the letters, and they were all copied from current English translations, including even the notes and explanations of the English translators. They were principally copied from Beal's *Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*. In other places where the adept (?) is using his own language in explanation of Buddhistic terms and ideas, I find that his presumed original language was copied nearly word for word from Rhys Davids's *Buddhism*, and other books. I have traced every Buddhistic idea in these letters and in *Esoteric Buddhism*, and every Buddhistic term, such as Devachan, Avitchi, etc., to the books whence Helena Petrovna Blavatsky derived them. Although said to be proficient in the knowledge of Thibetan and Sanskrit, the words and terms in these languages in the letters of the adepts were nearly all used in a ludicrously erroneous and absurd manner. The writer of those letters was an

ignoramus in Sanskrit and Thibetan; and the mistakes and blunders in them, in these languages, are in exact accordance with the known ignorance of Madame Blavatsky thereanent. *Esoteric Buddhism*. like all of Madame Blavatsky's works, was based upon wholesale plagiarism and ignorance.

From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan, although published, in letters to a Russian journal, as a veracious narrative of actual experiences of Madame Blavatsky in India, was admitted by Colonel Olcott in *Theosophist*, January, 1893, pp. 245, 246, to be largely a work of fiction; and this has been even partially conceded in its preface. Like her other books it swarms with blunders, misstatements, falsehoods and garblings. Full *exposé* of it will be included in my work. The *Key to Theosophy*, by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, being a compendium of doctrines, its plagiarism consists in the ideas and teachings which it contains, rather than in plagiarised passages from other books.

In addition to wholesale plagiarism, other marked characteristics of Madame Blavatsky's writings are these: (1) Wholesale garbling, distortion and literary forgery, of which there are very many instances in *Isis* particularly. The Koot Hoomi letters to Hume and Sinnett contain garbled and spurious quotations from Buddhist sacred books, manufactured by the writer to embody her own peculiar ideas, under the fictitious guise of genuine Buddhism. (2) Wealth of misstatement and error in all branches of knowledge treated by her; *e.g.*, in *Isis* there are over 600 false statements in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Assyriology, Egyptology, etc. (3) Mistakes and blunders of many varied kinds—in names of books and authors, in words and figures and what not; nearly 700 being in *Isis* alone. (4) Great contradiction and inconsistency, both in primary and essential points and in minor matters and

details. There are probably thousands of contradictions in the whole circuit of her writings.

The doctrines, teachings, dogmas, etc., of theosophy, as published by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and affirmed to be derived from the *quasi*-infallible Mahatmas of Thibet, were borrowed from the philosophies and religions of the past and present, with some admixture of modern science. There is nothing original in this "Wisdom of the Gods," or "Wisdom Religion," save the work of compilation into a composite whole of the heterogeneous mass of materials gathered by Madame Blavatsky from so many sources, and the garblings, perversions, and fabrications indulged in by her in the preparation of the system of thought called theosophy. A careful analysis of her teachings shows that they were collected from the sources named below. (1) Madame Blavatsky was a spiritualistic medium many years before she became a theosophist, and in its inception theosophy was an off-shoot from spiritualism; and from this source was a large part of her theosophy taken. I find that its teachings upon some 267 points were copied from those of spiritualism. (2) In its later form, Hinduism constitutes one of the larger portions of theosophy. I have not attempted an exhaustive classification of the numerous minor points taken from this source, but I have noted 281 of the more important. (3) From Buddhism I have noted 63. (4) In the beginnings of theosophy, the basis of most of its teachings was derived from the works of Eliphas Levi, and I count 102 points therefrom borrowed. (5) From Paracelsus's works were taken 49. (6) From Jacob Böhme, 81. (7) From the Cabbala, 86. (8) From Plato, the Platonists, the Neo-Platonists, and Hermes, 80. (9) From Gnosticism, 61. (10) From modern science and philosophy, 75. (11) From Zoroastrianism, 26. (12) From Kingsford and Maitland's *Perfect Way*, 24. (13) From general mythology, 20. (14) From Egyptology, 17. (15)

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